

# **TRANSIT PLAN**

## **MONO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The overall purpose of the Mono County Transit Plan is to establish a short term action program (5 year) and long term (20 year) goals and policies for the development and operation of a transit system which provides for the needs of local residents as well as visitors. The plan addresses regional routes which provide access to communities throughout the county and to major recreational areas, as well as community routes which provide access throughout communities and to surrounding recreational areas. The plan focuses on the unincorporated area of the county, since the Town of Mammoth Lakes has a Transit Development Plan and different needs than the rest of the county.

The Transit Plan is intended to expand upon and implement policies in the Mono County Regional Transportation Plan, the Mono County General Plan, and associated Area Plans, and to coordinate with applicable plans of surrounding jurisdictions.

Specific purposes of the plan are to analyze existing transit services and to provide a concise summary of those services, to evaluate the needs of county residents and visitors for transit services, to estimate future demand for transit services, to evaluate funding opportunities to sustain the long-term viability of the transit system, and to delineate policies for the future development and operation of transit systems in the county.

## **II. SETTING FOR TRANSIT SERVICES**

### **PLANNING AREA OVERVIEW**

Mono County is a rural county located on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada. Its boundaries extend from the crest of the Sierra in the west and north to the Nevada state line in the east and the Inyo County line in the south. The county has an area of 3,103 square miles and in 1990 had a population of 9,956 persons. Approximately half of the population (4,785 persons in 1990) lives in the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the county's only incorporated community. The remainder of the population is dispersed in several distinct communities, located along U.S. Hwy. 395 and State Hwy. 6.

Land development patterns are set and unlikely to change substantially. Approximately 94 percent of the land in the County is owned by public agencies; approximately 88 percent is federally owned and is managed by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The limited private land base limits the growth potential for permanent residents but it also provides the foundation for the County's tourist-based economy.

Land use in the county's communities is primarily residential, with a mix of commercial, light industrial, institutional, and recreational uses. Land uses other than residential are limited. Most residents must travel outside of the community in which they live for school, work, most shopping, entertainment, medical services, and other business.

Hwy 395 serves as the main access to and through Mono County. The transportation system in the county is typical of many rural counties. Private automobiles are the primary mode of moving people; trucks are the primary mode of moving goods. Throughout the County, the transportation system is a key support system which sustains the social, economic, and recreational activities in the County. Other modes of transportation have been limited by the terrain, the weather, and the lack of a sufficient population base to support them. These factors continue to restrict the development of alternative transportation systems in the County.

Traffic congestion is generally not a problem in Mono County except in certain communities; primarily Mammoth Lakes and June Lake. Lack of sufficient parking is also a problem in those communities. Transportation related air quality impacts resulting primarily from auto emissions, including diesel fuel from buses, and from resuspended road dust and cinders, are a particular problem in community areas (Mammoth Lakes and June Lake), especially during congested periods in the winter when inversion layers trap the pollutants close to the ground.

### **ECONOMY**

Mono County's economy is highly dependent on tourism and outdoor recreation, and to a secondary degree on federal, state, and local government. Other industries with substantial employment include the real estate industry and various service and retail operations such as hotels, restaurants and stores. Major employers in the county include federal, state and local governments, and Mammoth Mountain/June Mountain Ski Area.



The economy tends to be somewhat seasonal. In the past, activities related to skiing contributed the most to the economy. In recent years, efforts to increase recreational use during the remainder of the year have reduced seasonal impacts to the economy.

### **MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTERS**

Mammoth Lakes is a major activity center in the southern portion of the county (Mono Basin south) for employment, commercial, social services, and entertainment. A variety of county government services are also available in Mammoth Lakes. Bridgeport is a major activity center in the northern portion of the county (Bridgeport north) for employment and social services. As the county seat, Bridgeport is also a hub for institutional purposes. Individual communities serve as local activity centers for the surrounding areas, offering limited commercial and employment opportunities.

Recreational destinations throughout the county serve as activity centers, depending on the season. Mammoth Mountain/June Mountain Ski Area is a major activity center in the winter, during ski season. Lakes and rivers are major activity centers throughout much of the rest of the year, particularly during fishing season. Mono Lake and Hwy. 120 through Lee Vining, the eastern entrance to Yosemite National Park, are busy during the summer season.

Bishop is a major regional activity center for the southern portion of the county due to shopping, medical, and entertainment opportunities which are unavailable in Mono County. The Gardnerville/Carson City area in Nevada serves a similar need for the northern portion of the county.

### **COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS**

This section summarizes 1990 U.S. Census data pertinent to transit demand and transit needs in Mono County. The Census data for the unincorporated area has been aggregated into blocks corresponding to the county's planning areas. Data for each planning area include persons in the town and outlying areas, e.g. the Bridgeport Planning Area includes the community of Bridgeport, Bridgeport Valley, Twin Lakes, and Pickle Meadows.

Population in the unincorporated area of Mono County is fairly evenly dispersed throughout several small communities. Population per household is also evenly dispersed, with an average figure throughout the unincorporated area of 2.53 persons per household.

**Table 1    Population Distribution  
1990 Mono County (Unincorporated Area)**

<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>% of Population</b>	<b>Households</b>
Antelope Valley	1,403	27 %	517
Bridgeport Valley	750	15 %	297
Mono Basin	419	8 %	182
June Lake	615	12 %	229
Crowley Lake			
(includes Wheeler/Paradise)	1,085	21 %	458
Tri-Valley	<u>899</u>	<u>17 %</u>	<u>354</u>
<b>Total Unincorporated Area</b>	<b>5,171</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>2,037</b>

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing Summary. Tape File 3A.

Persons younger than 16 comprised 25 percent of the total unincorporated area population in 1990, with the highest percentage living in Antelope Valley (28 % of the Antelope Valley population) and Crowley Lake (29 % of the Crowley Lake population). Persons 60 years of age or older comprised 14 percent of the population, with the highest percentage living in Bridgeport (24 % of the Bridgeport population) and Tri-Valley (16 % of the Tri-Valley population). A small percentage of the total population (1.6 percent, 83 persons) had mobility limitations. Half of those with mobility limitations were over 65, half were between 16 and 64. Crowley Lake had the highest number of persons with mobility limitations (28 persons); Benton had the second highest number (18 persons).

Only 2.3 percent of all households had no vehicle, with the greatest number in Bridgeport (8.3 % of households in Bridgeport), while June Lake and Crowley Lake had no households without vehicles. Twenty-eight percent of all households had only one vehicle; the greatest numbers of one-car households were in Antelope Valley and Crowley Lake.

Approximately 11 percent of the unincorporated area population had a household income below the poverty level; most of this population lived in the Antelope Valley (21.2 % of the total) and the Tri-Valley (16.5 % of the total). Sixteen percent of the total number of persons with income below the poverty line were 60 years or older; the majority of that number lived in the Antelope Valley.

Table 2

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**Table 3 Persons Below Poverty Line By Age  
1990 Mono County (Unincorporated Area)**

Planning Area	Total Persons Below Poverty Line	Persons <18 Below Poverty Line	Persons 18-59 Below Poverty Line	Persons 60+ Below Poverty Line
Antelope Valley	298	121/21.5 %	120/21.3 %	57/10.1 %
Bridgeport Valley	48	20/3.6 %	19/3.4 %	9/1.6 %
Mono Basin	20	11/2.0 %	9/1.6 %	0
June Lake	30	0	30/5.3 %	0
Crowley Lake	19	0	13/2.3 %	6/1.1 %
Tri-Valley	<u>148</u>	<u>49/8.7%</u>	<u>81/14.4 %</u>	<u>18/3.2 %</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>201/35.7 %</b>	<b>272/48.3 %</b>	<b>90/16.0 %</b>

Note: Percentages of total persons below poverty line.

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing. Summary Tape File 3A.

**Table 4 Means of Transportation to Work  
1990 Unincorporated Area (Workers 16 and over)**

Means	Antelope Valley	Bridge- port	Mono Basin	June Lake	Crowley Lake	Tri- Valley	Total #	% <sup>1</sup>
Drove Alone	380	276	108	211	445	246	1,666	63.5
Carpooled	150	25	62	16	94	55	402	15.3
Bus	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	<1
Motorcycle	0	0	0	0	11	0	11	<1
Bicycle	0	12	0	0	6	2	20	<1
Walked	65	45	25	38	26	22	221	8.4
Other Means	0	6	0	0	8	27	41	1.6
Worked at Home	14	19	44	100	35	44	<u>256</u>	<u>9.8</u>
					<b>Total Workers</b>		<b>2,622</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 1. Percentage of Total Workers.

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing. Summary Tape File 3A.

Close to 80 percent of the working population drove to work in 1990; 63.5 percent drove alone while 15.3 percent carpooled. Close to 10 percent worked at home and did not commute at all. A significant percentage (8.4 %) walked to work, with the highest number of walkers in the Antelope Valley, Bridgeport and June Lake. Less than 1 percent took a bus or bicycled. These figures are not surprising, given the long distances many people travel to work, the often harsh weather conditions, and the lack of available transit services for commuters.

**Table 5 Commuters**  
**1990 Unincorporated Area (Workers 16 and over)**

<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Commuters</b>	<b>% of All Commuters</b>
Antelope Valley	595	25 %
Bridgeport Valley	364	15 %
Mono Basin	195	8 %
June Lake	265	11 %
Crowley Lake		
(includes Wheeler/Paradise)	590	25 %
Tri-Valley	<u>357</u>	<u>15 %</u>
<b>Total Unincorporated Area</b>	<b>2,366</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing. Summary Tape File 3A.

The highest percentages of commuters in 1990 lived in the Antelope Valley and Crowley Lake. Many residents of the Antelope Valley must commute out of the valley to work due to the lack of employment in their communities. Many residents of Crowley Lake commute to Mammoth Lakes for a variety of reasons, including employment.

**Table 6 Mean Travel Time to Work**  
**1990 Unincorporated Area (Workers 16 and over)**

<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Mean Travel Time</b>
Antelope Valley	20 to 24 minutes
Bridgeport Valley	5 to 9 minutes
Mono Basin	20 to 24 minutes
June Lake	20 to 24 minutes
Crowley Lake	
(includes Wheeler/Paradise)	20 to 24 minutes
Tri-Valley	20 to 24 minutes

Source: 1990 Census of Population and Housing. Summary Tape F.

The mean travel time figures in Table 6 indicate that most people in the county must commute outside of their community to work. The exception is the Bridgeport Valley, where many people work in the area.

### **III. CURRENT TRANSIT SERVICES**

#### **OVERVIEW OF EXISTING PROVIDERS**

The following transit and paratransit services are currently available in Mono County or in areas adjacent to Mono County.

##### **Regional Transit Availability**

###### **Nevada--Gardnerville/Carson City/Reno**

Municipal transit service is available within Reno (Citifare). Carson City provides limited service for mentally handicapped persons and seniors. Patrons call for rides and the service is only available within Carson City. There is no public transit service in the Gardnerville area. Public transit service between Carson City and Reno has been tried several times in the past but has never proved viable; currently, only private operators provide service between the two areas.

Douglas County, including Minden, Gardnerville, and Carson City, has no demand responsive dial-a-ride service. Carson City is in the planning stages for dial-a-ride service.

One private operator currently provides service from Topaz Lodge to the Reno Airport, with stops available throughout Douglas County. Budget Chauffeur Drive/No Stress Express is based in Minden and operates on a reservation basis. The fee from Topaz Lodge to Gardnerville is \$ 11, from Topaz to Carson City \$ 21, and from Topaz to the Reno Airport \$ 36.

##### **Yosemite**

Transit services within Yosemite National Park are concentrated primarily within the Valley. Daily shuttles provide service in summer from the Valley along Tioga Road to Tuolumne Meadows. In the past, limited summer shuttle service has been available from Tuolumne Meadows to Lee Vining.

##### **Inter-Regional Transit**

Greyhound Lines provides scheduled inter-regional transit service along Hwy. 395 between Los Angeles and Reno, with one northbound and one southbound bus per day. The service is not conducive to use by local residents due to current scheduling and the lack of designated stations.

Non-scheduled regional and inter-regional transit service is also offered by private charter lines. In winter, most charter services originate from the Southern California area and provide round trip transportation for organized ski trips. In the summer, most charter services coming to the county are part of package tours. Tour and charter bus volumes are presently highest in the summer months, although volumes are also high on peak winter ski weekends. The California Highway Patrol estimates that approximately 40 buses per day use the highways through Mono County between June and October.

##### **Countywide Public Transit**

Public transit services are provided for Mono and Inyo Counties by Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride (IMDAR). The system is discussed in detail later in this section.

**Mammoth Area Shuttle (MAS)**

Free public transit service is provided in Mammoth Lakes by MAS. This system is not intended to provide comprehensive services to local residents, but is designed to transport visitors in Mammoth Lakes to a variety of skiing, recreational, dining, lodging and retail areas. The system, which is operated and funded by Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, currently operates in the winter, generally from November through April. In FY 94/95, the system had approximately 700,000 passengers. Operating costs are figured at \$ 65 per hour over the course of the season. The MAS fleet has no handicapped accessible buses. Vehicle maintenance is provided at Mammoth Mountain Ski Area facilities.

MAS buses are used in the summer (June through September) to operate a tourist shuttle from Mammoth Mountain Inn to Red's Meadow and Devil's Postpile National Monument. The summer service is operated in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service; fares are set by the USFS. The summer shuttle generally breaks even, although it may lose money if the summer season starts late. In the past four years, summer ridership has been approximately 34,000 for 3 months of service and 45,000 for four months of service.

The **Town of Mammoth Lakes Transit System Design and Development Plan** recommends that a year round public transit system in Mammoth Lakes be administered by the Town and operated under a municipal contract by Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, utilizing its current fleet of vehicles.

**Mammoth Shuttle Systems**

Mammoth Shuttle Systems is a private service based in Mammoth Lakes which provides on-demand transit services for the area from Lone Pine to Reno and a regular service on Sundays from Mammoth to Reno. Vans are not handicapped accessible but the shuttle provides transit services for Mammoth Hospital and mobility impaired riders on a frequent basis.

**Sierra Shuttle**

Sierra Shuttle is a private service based in Bishop which provides on-demand transit services as far away as Reno, LAX, and San Francisco. Currently, the service is providing daily trips to Reno because of the lack of air service to and from Mammoth Lakes. The fare to Reno is \$80. The shuttle also provides charter services to Las Vegas, trailheads, or wherever the demand is. Vans are not handicapped accessible.

**Airport Shuttle**

Airport Shuttle is a private service based in Mammoth Lakes which provides on-demand transit service in the Mammoth Lakes area to coincide with available air services. Vans are not handicapped accessible.

**Lodging-based Shuttles**

This service is provided by condominiums and hotels in Mammoth Lakes and June Lake. These shuttles provide on-demand service to the Mammoth Airport and to the ski areas for lodging guests.

**TaxiCab Service**

Services are currently provided by a taxicab service based in Mammoth Lakes which offers demand responsive service on a metered basis.

### **Mammoth Mountain and June Mountain Ski Areas**

The ski areas provide scheduled employee van shuttle service between Bishop, Mammoth and June Lake. Ridership is restricted to ski area employees living in Bishop.

### **Toiyabe Indian Health Project**

The Toiyabe Indian Health Project provides transportation for Native Americans and their families for shopping, medical and other necessary purposes. Based in Bishop, the project provides transportation in both Inyo and Mono Counties.

### **GAIN (Greater Access for Independent Living)**

GAIN is an education and job training program run by the County Department of Social Services. They have a van which they use to transport clients to various activities.

### **School Buses**

The county's dispersed population and the location of its public schools require some students to travel many miles to and from school. Both the Eastern Sierra Unified School District and the Mammoth Lakes School District provide bus services for their students. Neither district has any handicapped accessible buses or vans. Vehicle maintenance for the Mammoth Unified School District buses is provided at the Town of Mammoth Lakes maintenance facility. Vehicle maintenance for the Eastern Sierra Unified School District is provided at the Lee Vining Maintenance Facility.

## **INYO MONO DIAL-A-RIDE (IMDAR)**

### **Current Service**

Public transit services are provided for Mono and Inyo Counties by Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride (IMDAR) which is administered by the Inyo Mono Area Agency on Aging (IMAAA). IMDAR provides fixed-route services and demand-responsive services for senior citizens, disabled persons, and the general public. Specialized transportation services provided by IMAAA include escort services (transporting and accompanying frail elders who cannot successfully utilize public transportation), out-of-county medical transportation for residents who need medical attention which cannot be obtained in the County when the person has no other means of transportation, limited transportation to school and job training (GAIN), and medical trips. The agency also offers special services, such as trailhead shuttles and other charters, when equipment is available.

Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride currently offers demand responsive services 6 days a week as well as weekly fixed-route services in Mono County. Demand Responsive Services are offered in Walker, Bridgeport, and Benton. Buses are based at the senior centers in each of those communities and provide local transportation services for the public on an as-needed basis.

The Benton DAR service is available during limited hours on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The availability of DAR service in Benton is somewhat sporadic due to driver availability and the small nature of the community.

The Walker DAR operates approximately 3.5 hours per day, Monday through Friday. The driver shares other obligations for senior services. The Bridgeport DAR operates on Tuesdays between 10 a.m. and noon when the bus is in town from Walker. Service has not been available consistently due to lack of ridership between Walker and Bridgeport.



There is also some sporadic local Bridgeport transit if and when a customer contacts the area driver directly to request it.

Fixed-route services are available 6 days per week for destinations from Carson City to Bishop (see Figure 1). Most routes stop at various locations between the trip's end points. Door to door pickups and returns are available upon request for many of these routes. The fixed route services operate as a subscription fixed route service; on all routes except the Mammoth to Bishop route, users are encouraged to make a reservation in order to increase service efficiency and provide a higher level of service. Fares for the fixed routes cover the round trip and unlimited stops within the destination community.

The current service is fragmented and inefficient. All routes provide one roundtrip per scheduled service day; buses leave the origination point in early to mid-morning, reach the destination point mid-day, and return to the origination point by late afternoon (see route schedules in Appendix A). The current service does not allow for connections between existing routes, i.e. a passenger riding from Benton to Bishop is unable to travel on to Mammoth Lakes or Bridgeport. Similarly, a passenger from Walker to Bridgeport is unable to travel further south in the county to Mammoth Lakes, Bishop, or points inbetween. The current service does not provide convenient service to the main activity centers in the county, Mammoth Lakes and Bridgeport. The current route scheduling makes it difficult to schedule appointments and in many cases does not allow sufficient time for passengers to complete their activities. The current service is not user-friendly for most people but only for those with leisure time to devote the whole day to a trip somewhere. As a result, it serves primarily daytripper needs to Bishop and Gardnerville/Carson City.

The following itinerary from the April 19, 1996, trip from Bridgeport to Carson City provides an idea of a typical trip.

- Bus leaves Bridgeport at 7:30 a.m. with four senior passengers.
- Passenger picked up at home in Walker at 8:20 a.m.
- Senior passenger picked up at home in Walker.
- Bus stops at Antelope Medical Clinic while two of the Bridgeport passengers go in. Bus waits 10-15 minutes for their return.
- Senior passenger picked up at home in Coleville.
- Ten minute stop at Topaz Lodge for a few passengers to use the restroom and one to cash a check. Bus parks next to the front door because of seniors.
- Bus stops at convalescent home in Carson City at the request of a passenger for a quick visit. Bus waits approximately 10 minutes for passenger.
- Stop at private residence to drop off a passenger for a visit.
- Stop at Canned Foods Store for groceries and miscellaneous.
- Pick up passenger left at private residence.
- Stop at Walmart--1 hour to shop.
- Stop at Raley's in Gardnerville--1 hour to shop.
- Return to Antelope Valley. Drop off the Coleville passenger and the two Walker passengers at approximately 5:00 p.m.
- Return to Bridgeport. Drop off the four passengers at approximately 5:50 p.m.

If riders need to stop at the post office, hardware store, J.C. Penney, etc., the group as a whole and the driver try to comply. Some riders bring ice chests for their groceries; the driver helps some passengers with their groceries. Data from transit surveys conducted by LTC staff indicate that shopping is a major trip purpose for riders from Bridgeport,

Antelope Valley, and Tri-Valley. Those riders also indicated that they need more time for shopping and more room on the bus for their purchases.

**FIGURE 1A    CURRENT IMDAR ROUTES--MONDAY SCHEDULE**

**FIGURE 1B    CURRENT IMDAR ROUTES--TUESDAY SCHEDULE**

**FIGURE 1C    CURRENT IMDAR ROUTES--WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE**

**FIGURE 1D CURRENT IMDAR ROUTES--THURSDAY SCHEDULE**

**FIGURE 1E    CURRENT IMDAR ROUTES--FRIDAY SCHEDULE**

**FIGURE 1F CURRENT IMDAR ROUTES--SATURDAY SCHEDULE**



**Ridership and Fare Structure**

Ridership data for IMDAR are sparse. The system needs to improve its data collection to be able to more accurately determine ridership trends, user characteristics, and future needs. Overall ridership on IMDAR has increased 39 percent from FY 92/93 to FY 94/95 (the last year for which complete data are available). The change in ridership on individual routes varies widely, from moderate decreases to substantial increases. Ridership decreased on the Benton DAR, Bridgeport DAR, and the special routes. Ridership on the remaining routes increased, from 8 percent on the Benton-Bishop route, to 315 percent on the Mammoth-Bishop route and 420 percent on the Walker DAR. Overall ridership on the Bridgeport DAR and the Walker-Bridgeport route is extremely low.

Although ridership on most IMDAR routes in Mono County is 90 to 100 percent seniors, certain routes have much lower rates of senior ridership. Senior ridership in FY 94/95 on the Bridgeport DAR was only 65 percent, on the Bridgeport-Bishop route 41 percent, Mammoth-Bishop 5 percent, the Walker DAR 75 percent, and the Walker-Gardnerville route 82 percent. Senior ridership on IMDAR from FY 93/94 to FY 94/95 declined on some routes, generally on those routes with already low senior ridership. During this period, overall ridership on routes with declining senior ridership actually increased in all cases but the Bridgeport DAR.

Declining senior ridership is a significant trend for two reasons. First, IMDAR routes are currently subsidized by Older Americans Act funds which are for the provision of services for the elderly. Routes with low senior ridership may not be eligible for the subsidy. Second, a decline in senior ridership without a corresponding decline in the overall number of passengers indicates a demand from other segments of the population which may have different transit needs than the elderly.

IMDAR vehicles currently in use in Mono County seat 14-15 passengers. Two vehicles on order will seat 17 passengers. Average ridership figures in Table 8 show that the vehicles are currently highly underutilized on most trips, which is highly inefficient and costly. Only the trips from Bridgeport to Bishop or Carson City are over half full. This may be an indication of the relative isolation of Bridgeport from large, regional shopping and service centers.

It is IMDAR's policy not to run long distance routes in Mono County if a certain number of people do not show up or reserve a seat. The driver or supervising site coordinator can make a decision not to send the bus if there are too few riders and their trip purposes are not vital (i.e. medical needs). On larger buses, the rule of thumb is generally less than 3 riders. This creates difficulties for someone dependent on the bus.

**Table 7 Ridership--Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride (Total Passengers & Senior Passengers)**

Route	FY 92/93 T/% S <sup>1</sup>	FY 93/94 T/% S	FY 94/95 T/% S	% Change in Ridership FY 92/93--FY 94/95
Benton DAR <sup>2</sup>	950	99.4 %	667/97 %	- 30 %
Benton-Bishop	631	92 %	687/92 %	+ 8 %
Bridgeport DAR <sup>2</sup>	92	80 %	74/65 %	- 20 %
Bridgeport-Bishop	432	67 %	525/41 %	+ 22 %
Bridgeport-Carson City	608	90.5 %	727/94 %	+ 20 %
Mammoth-Bishop	152	23.5 %	631/5 %	+ 315 %
Walker DAR <sup>2</sup>	276	97 %	1,436/75 %	+ 420 %
Walker-Bridgeport	NS	NS	9/93 %	NA
Walker-Gardnerville	154	100 %	199/82 %	+ 29 %
Special Rtes.	<u>392</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>221/93 %</u>	<u>- 44 %</u>
<b>Totals</b>	3,737	NA	5,176/82 %	+ 39 %
Notes: Total passenger data not available for FY 93/94. Senior passenger data not available for FY 92/93. NS = No service. NA = Data not available. 1. T/% S = Total Passengers/Percent Senior Passengers (60+). 2. DAR = Dial-A-Ride. Local demand responsive trips.				

Source: IMAAA.

**Table 8 Average Ridership Per Trip--Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride (FY 93/94 to FY 94/95)**

Route	FY 93/94	FY 94/95
Benton DAR <sup>1</sup>	NA	4.3
Benton-Bishop	5.4	6.6
Bridgeport DAR <sup>1</sup>	NA	NA
Bridgeport-Bishop	8.7	10.1
Bridgeport-Carson City	7.7	9.6
Mammoth-Bishop	4.4	3
Walker DAR <sup>1</sup>	2.7	5.5
Walker-Bridgeport	NS	0.7
Walker-Gardnerville	2.0	3.8
Special Rtes.	NA	NA
Notes: NA = Data not available. NS = No service. 1. DAR = Dial-A-Ride.		



**Table 9 Current Fare Structure--Mono County Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride**

<b>Route</b>	<b>One Way Fare</b>	<b>Discount Fare</b>
Benton-Bishop	\$ 2.25	\$ 1.80
Bridgeport-Bishop	\$ 5.00	\$ 4.00
Bridgeport-Carson City	\$ 3.50	\$ 2.80
Mammoth-Bishop	\$ 2.50	\$ 2.00
Walker-Bridgeport	\$ 1.75	\$ 1.40
Walker-Gardnerville	\$ 1.75	\$ 1.40

Shorter journeys along these fixed routes are charged less (see the current IMDAR schedules in Appendix A). Discount fares (20 percent off) are available to disabled persons, seniors (60+), and children 5-16. Children under 5 ride free. Although there is an established senior fare, IMAAA's policy is to offer services to those 60 and over on a donation basis, i.e. the policy allows a senior to put in whatever he or she can afford, including nothing. IMDAR does not know the exact amount in fares contributed by seniors. Passes are available for most routes and provide a 10 percent discount over the purchase of individual tickets.

Local DAR fares are 50¢ one way for adults, 40¢ for discount fares. Seniors are allowed to donate or not for the ride. Specialized transportation services, such as escort services, generally operate on a donation basis. These services utilize state transit funds and are subject to the 17.5 percent farebox recovery requirement.

IMAAA subsidizes the Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride system with Older Americans Act (OAA) funds which are provided to subsidize services up to the 17.5 percent fare box ratio required by the Mono County Local Transportation Commission. The County Department of Social Services subsidizes passenger fares for persons participating in the GAIN program.

Long distance fares are based upon trip distance and the route involved. Charter fares, such as trailhead trips, are rated based upon an estimated hourly fee, which is quoted and paid in advance when time allows.

**Fleet Data**

Table 10 lists the vehicles currently in use in Mono County for Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride services. These buses are owned by IMAAA, Inyo County, and Mono County. Various IMAAA vehicles, which are used in Mono County for IMAAA authorized services, also act as back-up public transit vehicles.

**Table 10 Mono County Fleet--Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Make/Model</b>	<b>Mileage</b>	<b>Usage</b>
14 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift	1983	Ford/Wayne	200,000+	Ready to Retire
14 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift Rear Storage Unit	1990	Ford/El Dorado	130,000	Bridgeport-Carson City Bridgeport-Bishop
14 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift	1993	Ford/Collins	30,000	Walker DAR Walker-Gardnerville
15 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift	1994	Ford/Supreme	36,000	Benton-Bishop Benton DAR Mammoth-Bishop
17 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift Rear Storage Unit Bike Rack	1995	Chevy/Supreme	On order	Mammoth-Bishop
17 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift Rear Storage Unit Bike Rack	1995	Chevy/Supreme	On order	Replace Bridgeport Bus

Source: IMAAA.

### **Passenger Amenities, Signs and Marketing**

IMDAR offers no passenger amenities (e.g. shelters, benches) other than door-to-door pickups and drop offs. Amenities are not generally needed since much of the current service is demand responsive door-to-door service.

IMAAA publishes the Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride Riders Guide at least each July (this guide has not been updated in some time). It contains 10-12 pages of service information, such as schedules and user guides, and is available from staff and at key community centers, as long as the supply lasts. IMAAA also operates a toll-free telephone information line.

Until recently, the public transit component of the system has not been promoted heavily. IMAAA has been increasing marketing efforts, primarily by placing flyers concerning the service throughout communities in Mono County and by advertising in the newspaper. Flyers and schedules are not user-friendly; they do not explain how the system works or where pickup and dropoff points are. The Mammoth-Bishop route is advertised on local radio stations KMMT and KBIS; ads are designed to appeal to the main users of that route, kids who ride the bus to ski in Mammoth.

Until recently, IMDAR buses in Mono County were not identified with the same vehicle markings. Implementing a recommendation from the **Transit Efficiency Study** (1993), all vehicles in Mono County have been painted with the same vehicle markings. Drivers do not wear uniforms identifying them as employees of the transit service due to the added cost it would bring to the program.

IMDAR routes are not marked with signs since service is primarily door-to-door demand responsive service. If fixed-route service is implemented, signs will be necessary.

### **Facilities and Maintenance**

IMDAR does not have any separate facilities. Dispatch and administrative offices are housed in rented space in Bishop which is shared with IMAAA. IMDAR pays a percentage of the rent.

Vehicle maintenance occurs at various vendors in Bishop and Gardnerville (Walker bus only). IMDAR does not go out to bid for maintenance services. Over the years, they have selected maintenance vendors through a trial and error process, evaluating quality of service, prices, follow-up service, speed of service, and honesty. IMDAR staff feel that going out to bid would be difficult given the difficulty of specifying all their maintenance needs in a bid request. In addition, the California Highway Patrol has a number of maintenance requirements with which IMDAR must comply, including a long list of areas on each bus which must meet certain standards and must be inspected every 3000 miles or 45 days, whichever comes first.

## IV. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

### FEDERAL TRANSIT REQUIREMENTS

#### **Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against disabled persons in all services, programs or activities provided by public entities or by private entities under contract to public entities. The law delineates specific actions required by public transit agencies to avoid discrimination.

- All newly purchased or leased vehicles in fixed route service must be accessible.
- Public entities which provide fixed route public transit services must also offer comparable paratransit services to disabled persons who are unable to use the fixed route system.
- New or used vehicles purchased or leased for use in general public demand responsive services must be accessible unless it can be shown that equivalent service is provided to persons with disabilities.
- Vehicles which are remanufactured (defined to include structural changes) to extend their useful life (5 years for buses) must include accessibility features.
- New facilities must be accessible.

The criteria for determining whether a service is accessible include the following:

- Physical access (e.g. lifts, ramps) properly designed to accommodate different mobility aids.
- Proper training of personnel and proper maintenance of equipment.
- Operating policies and procedures adopted by transit agencies to ensure accessibility.
- Making public information and communication systems accessible to persons with hearing or vision impairments.

#### **Clean Air Act (Federal and State)**

The Federal and State Clean Air Acts require a reduction of trips and dependence on the automobile in congested areas and air quality non-attainment areas. Mono County does not have any non-attainment areas except Mammoth Lakes. The Town's Circulation Element policies promote the development of a transit system and other alternatives to the automobile to address impacts to air quality resulting from congestion. The Town's **Transit System Design and Development Plan** is intended to implement its General Plan policies.

The California Clean Air Act also requires that all diesel buses utilized for transit use reformulated fuel as of October 1, 1993.

### STATE TRANSIT REQUIREMENTS

#### **Transportation Development Act (TDA)**

The Transportation Development Act (TDA) has several requirements relevant to transit services in Mono County. Transit planning agencies and transit operators are subject to these TDA statutes and regulations. TDA funding is intended to promote public transportation and to provide for pro-active development of transit services. The TDA

funding process requires local transit planning agencies to identify transit demand through the "unmet transit needs" hearing process.

The TDA also requires that the ratio of fare revenues to operating costs is at least 10 percent in nonurbanized areas. This is referred to as the "farebox recovery ratio".

The TDA requires the establishment of a social services transportation advisory council for each county, or counties operating under a joint powers agreement. The law specifies the membership for the council and its responsibilities. The council's primary responsibilities are to participate in the unmet needs hearing process and to advise the LTC's on transit issues.

### **TRANSIT POLICIES**

This Transit Plan is intended to expand upon and implement policies in the Mono County Regional Transportation Plan and the Mono County General Plan, and to coordinate with applicable plans of surrounding jurisdictions. In order to do so, this section summarizes existing transit policies from Mono County, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Inyo County, Forest Service Plans, Bureau of Land Management Plans, and Yosemite National Park.

#### **Mono County General Plan and Regional Transportation Plan**

The 1993 Update of the **Mono County General Plan Circulation Element** contains policies relating to transit services. The policies included in the Circulation Element are the same as those included in the 1992 Update of the **Mono County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)** and the 1994 Update of the RTP. The 1994 Update of the RTP also includes draft multi-modal policies for the Bodie Hills and June Lake.

#### **This next section was updated June 2, 1999 (remove this note with next update)**

*Mono County transit policies promote continued support for transit services that are responsive to the needs of commuters and transit dependent users, the development of improved inter-regional transit services, the development of multi-modal transportation systems, and the development of additional funding to support transit services. The transit policies support established countywide and community goals for land use, economic development and environmental preservation. In general, countywide and community goals focus development in and adjacent to established communities in order to protect the environment and to develop/improve opportunities for economic development.*

*Mono County's transit policies are excerpted in Appendix B.*

#### **Mono County Local Transportation Commission**

*The Mono County LTC implements state requirements for transit planning and development with procedures outlined in the Mono County LTC Procedure Manual. To implement the "unmet needs hearing" requirement, the LTC has defined "unmet transit needs", "necessities of life", and "reasonable to meet" (Resolution 98-01).*

#### **"Unmet transit needs"**

*A need of Mono County elderly, disabled, low-income, youth, and other transit dependent groups for transit service that is currently not available and, if provided for, would enable*



the transit dependent person to obtain the basic necessities of life primarily within Mono County.

**"Necessities of life"**

Trips necessary for medical and dental services, essential personal business, employment, social service appointments, shopping for food or clothing, and social and recreational purposes.

**"Reasonable to meet"**

Transit needs for the necessities of life which pertain to all public and/or specialized transportation services that:

- a. can be proven operationally feasible;
- b. can demonstrate community acceptance;
- c. would be available to the general population;
- d. can be proven to be economical; and
- e. can demonstrate cost effectiveness by meeting current farebox revenue requirements of the Mono County LTC within two years.

**Farebox Recovery Ratio**

As allowed by state law, the Mono County LTC has adopted a local farebox recovery ratio of 12 percent, instead of the 10 percent required by the TDA.

**Town of Mammoth Lakes**

The 1994 Draft Update of the **Mono County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)** contains the Town of Mammoth Lakes' policies pertaining to transit. The overall goal of the Town's transportation policies is to reduce dependence on the automobile by developing and implementing a multi-modal transportation plan which includes the following components; a low-cost or free year-round transit system, extensive pedestrian facilities, alternative transportation such as gondolas and a people mover, and a bikeway and trail system.

The Town has also completed a **Transit System Design and Development Plan** which contains specific direction for the development of a transit system. The Transit Plan recommends that the Town establish a transit system based on a Municipal Services Contract. Under such a contract, the Town would be responsible for the administration and management of the system, the contractor (assumed to be Mammoth Mountain Ski Area) would be responsible for system operations, and a Transportation Management Association (composed of major lodging associations, condominium associations, resort and recreational areas, and possibly merchants and the Forest Service) would be responsible for transit related funding, transportation demand management strategies, and minimum performance standards.

**Inyo County**

The **Inyo County Regional Transportation Plan and General Plan Circulation Element** (1994) contains policies relating to transit. Inyo County's transit policies are similar to Mono County's. They promote continued support for transit services that are responsive to the needs of transit dependent users, the development of improved inter-city and inter-regional transit services, increased promotion of public transit to increase ridership, the development of multi-modal transportation systems, maximum use of state and federal funding for transit, and the identification of additional funding to support transit services.

### **Federal Jurisdictions**

The **Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Comprehensive Management Plan** (1989), the **Toiyabe National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan** (1986), and the BLM's **Resource Management Plan for the Bishop Resource Area**, do not contain any policies regarding public transit.

The **Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan** (1990) contains a few policies which support transit. The forestwide Standards and Guidelines calls for consideration of mass transit when vehicle use exceeds road capacity or threatens damage to resource values or when public facilities can best be served by a countywide system operated by another entity. The Dispersed Recreation Management Prescription encourages the use of mass transit opportunities and the Management Area Directions for the Mammoth Escarpment, Mammoth, and the Red Meadows all contain policies which promote the use of transit systems to recreational destinations (primarily in and around Mammoth Lakes).

Transportation policies for Yosemite National Park are contained in the **General Management Plan for Yosemite National Park**. Alternative modes proposed for implementing those policies are contained in a number of documents, including the **1994 Alternative Transportation Modes Feasibility Study** for Yosemite National Park, the **Yosemite Transportation Strategy** (Wilderness Society, 1992), and various documents prepared by YARTS, the Yosemite Area Regional Transportation Study. Most of these policies and proposed alternatives focus on reducing congestion in the Valley and at the western entrances to the Park by developing satellite parking areas outside of the Park, decreasing the number of cars allowed in the Valley, reducing parking within the Park, and increasing the number and type of shuttle services available. Policies also focus on reducing congestion in Tuolumne Meadows and along the Tioga Road (Hwy. 120) by utilizing similar measures, reducing parking, reducing the number of cars allowed, and increasing shuttle services. Connections to the east side are generally not considered.

## **V. TRANSIT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

### **TRANSIT NEED VS. TRANSIT DEMAND**

**"Transit need"** is generally defined as the identification of various market segments that are transit dependent and are in need of public transit services, e.g. senior citizens, disabled persons, low income persons, those without access to a vehicle, and youngsters.

**"Transit demand"** is the number of trips that people make.

This chapter assesses transit need in Mono County based on demographic information (see Chapter II, Community Demographics section), community input, and the result of an on-board ridership survey and a transit needs survey.

### **"UNMET NEEDS" HEARING**

In the past, the Mono County Local Transportation Commission has identified transit need primarily through the "unmet transit needs" hearing process as required by state law. The Mono County LTC implements this state requirement with procedures outlined in the Mono County LTC Procedure Manual. The unmet transit needs hearing process focuses on identifying needs of transit dependent groups, such as senior citizens, the disabled, and low income persons. Hearings have generally not resulted in extensive lists of unmet needs.

### **PUBLIC INPUT**

An important part of the Transit Plan is evaluating the needs and desires of county residents and visitors for transit services. The LTC used several public participation methods to help determine potential needs: community meetings, on-board surveys of existing transit riders, and a Transit Needs Survey.

#### **Citizen Advisory Committees**

The Mono County Local Transportation Commission staff met with the county's planning advisory committees to discuss transit needs and concerns. Their concerns are summarized below.

**Antelope Val.:** No transit needs identified.

**Bridgeport:** No transit needs identified.

**Mono Basin:** Daily runs between Lee Vining, Mono City and June Lake, mostly for kids who are trapped in town, unable to be with friends or stay for after school activities.

Visitor oriented summer transportation system to get visitors to Bodie, Mono Lake, South Tufa, Mono Mills, etc.. Could transfer to other providers to go to Devil's Post Pile, etc..

Shuttle between Lee Vining and Yosemite pretty unreliable past couple of years. Needs to be improved. Particularly for summertime visitors without vehicles. Mono County should be more user friendly to those folks.

**June Lake:** No transit needs identified.

**Crowley:** There is a need for regular commuter service between Long Valley communities and Mammoth Lakes.

**Tri-Valley:** No transit needs for Hammil Valley. Once a week DAR service should be made available in Chalfant, particularly for seniors.

### **On-Board Ridership Survey**

The Mono County Local Transportation Commission staff conducted on-board surveys on all existing IMDAR routes in order to assess current levels of service and to elicit suggestions for improvements. Surveys were distributed for several weeks. Thirty-six (36) responses were received for all routes. Responses for individual routes are summarized in Appendix C. The following general conclusions can be drawn from the responses:

- Shopping and medical/dental appointments are the main trip purposes for residents of Antelope Valley, Benton and Bridgeport. Trip purposes for riders from Mammoth Lakes to Bishop are much more varied.
- Frequency of usage varies but seems to be more often (1 or 2 times per week) and more consistent for those in outlying areas (Antelope Valley, Benton).
- Out of 36 respondents, only 1 required assistance boarding the bus.
- If IMDAR was not available, most would not make the trip or would ride with someone else. Only 3 would drive alone.
- Most riders in Antelope Valley, Bridgeport, and Benton are 65+ years old. Riders on the Mammoth/Bishop route are a more diverse group, and include several riders under 16, and 16-30.
- Respondents from Antelope Valley, Bridgeport and Benton generally had 0 or 1 operational vehicle. The number of operational vehicles for respondents on the Mammoth route was spread evenly among all categories, from 0 vehicles to 3+ vehicles.
- Most respondents would continue to ride the bus if there was a fare increase. Most favored a 5 % increase.
- Friends, or word-of-mouth was the predominant way of finding out about the service. Only 2 saw a flyer, 2 heard a radio ad, and 1 saw a newspaper ad. One saw the van.
- Comments varied (see Appendix C). Most in Benton and Antelope Valley liked the service the way it was.

**Transit Needs Survey**

The Mono County Local Transportation Commission conducted a newspaper and community survey designed to determine local knowledge of existing transit services and to elicit input concerning future transit needs. The survey was published in the local papers and placed in public gathering areas (libraries) in all communities. Respondents were given over one month to complete the survey. The survey was also translated into Spanish and distributed to the Hispanic community, primarily in Mammoth Lakes.

Eighty (80) responses were received for the English version; 59 responses were received for the Spanish version. Results were tabulated separately for the English and Spanish versions in order to see if the Hispanic community had different transportation needs. Responses are summarized in Appendix C. For both versions of the survey, the following general conclusions can be drawn:

- Approximately 60 percent of the English respondents live in Mammoth; 80 percent of the Spanish respondents also live in Mammoth. Approximately 20 percent of the English respondents live in the Antelope Valley. The remainder live throughout the county. No responses were received from residents of Bridgeport or the Tri-Valley.

It is important to remember that most respondents live in Mammoth. Many Mammoth Lakes residents focused largely on Mammoth Lakes, resulting in significant interest in improving bus service within Mammoth and providing additional service to other communities (particularly Bishop) from Mammoth.

- The majority of respondents were between the ages of 16 and 59. None was under 16. Eleven were 60 or older.
- 80 percent of the respondents in English knew about IMDAR, while only 27 percent of the respondents in Spanish did. This may indicate a failure to communicate information about IMDAR to the Hispanic community.
- Only 20 percent of English respondents and 5 percent of Spanish respondents had ridden IMDAR, primarily on the Mammoth to Bishop route.
- There was some confusion regarding the difference between Questions 5 and 6 (riding a bus between communities vs. within a community). Many respondents provided the same answer for both questions or did not answer #6.
- Shopping, appointments, and commuting to work or school were the primary reasons people would ride a bus between communities. Getting to recreational destinations was slightly less popular. Most of those who would not ride a bus would use their own vehicle. Although the directions asked respondents to indicate whether they would commute to work or school, few chose to do so.
- There is no real trend for how often respondents would ride a bus between communities, although 2-3 days per week had the most responses.
- The most popular communities to ride between were Mammoth-Bishop and Antelope Valley-Gardnerville/Carson City. A number of people indicated they would ride locally in Mammoth. There was also interest in the Mammoth-Crowley route.

- Answers for Question 6, would you ride within a community and, if so, which one, were substantially the same as the answers for Question 5. Mammoth was the community most would ride in.
- Most respondents were interested in seasonal service to various recreational destinations. Yosemite received the most interest, although Crowley Lake, the Lakes Basin, June Lake Loop, and Mammoth Mt. Ski Area received a significant amount of interest.
- People were very interested in being able to bring recreational equipment on the bus--bikes, skiing gear, fishing gear. A couple of comments spoke to the need for more space to put things and a need for better racks for snowboards.
- Responses to Questions 9 and 10 varied widely. A number of responses spoke of the need for year-round transit service in Mammoth Lakes, with more buses, more bus stops, and later evening hours, particularly in the summer. Several responses focused on the need for more convenient and regular scheduling.

### **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

There are several different types of transit service needs in Mono County. The demographic data in Chapter 2 and the results of the On-Board Ridership Survey show that there is a need for social service transit providing accessible year round service for low-income and disabled persons and particularly for the elderly.

Figure 2 summarizes the number and distribution of transit dependent persons throughout the County. Antelope Valley, Bridgeport, and Tri-Valley have the highest populations of senior citizens. There are very few disabled persons within the County; most live in the Crowley Lake area. Antelope Valley and Tri-Valley have the highest populations of low-income persons. The majority of households in the County have a car; the greatest number of households without cars are in the Antelope Valley and Bridgeport. The greatest number of youngsters are within Antelope Valley, Crowley Lake, and Tri-Valley.

Based on this demographic data, there is a need for basic social service transportation in Antelope Valley and Tri-Valley. It is evident from the responses to the On-Board Ridership Survey that transit services currently available in those areas are used primarily by senior citizens, who often do not have a car, for basic needs such as shopping and getting to medical and dental appointments.

The results of the Transit Needs Survey show an interest in seasonal access to recreational destinations such as Yosemite, Mono Lake, Bodie, etc., as well as a need for access to regional activity centers such as Bishop and Gardnerville/Carson City. Since many of the respondents were from Mammoth Lakes, the Survey results also showed a need for year-round transit in Mammoth Lakes.

**FIGURE 2 NUMBER & DISTRIBUTION OF TRANSIT DEPENDENT POPULATIONS**

## **CONSTRAINTS TO FUTURE TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT**

Several factors unique to Mono County act as constraints on the future development of transit services. These factors include the following:

**1. Low population density.**

Aside from Mammoth Lakes, Mono County's communities are small. There is not a sufficient population base to support extensive transit service within communities.

**2. Large distances between communities, recreational areas and other "activity centers".**

Mono County's communities are widely dispersed. Other popular destinations, such as Bodie, are located far from communities. These large distances make it difficult to run an efficient and cost-effective transit service.

**3. High rate of car ownership among County residents.**

Only 2.3 percent of households in the unincorporated area did not have a car in 1990. Mono County residents are highly dependent on their cars and used to the independence and flexibility of owning a car. It may be difficult to induce residents with cars to utilize transit services.

**4. Seasonal weather problems.**

Mono County experiences severe winter weather which affects the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of a transit system.

**5. Seasonal demand differs for transit, particularly transit related to recreation.**

Demand for transit services varies seasonally. In winter, demand is high in Mammoth Lakes for transit to the ski area. In summer, recreational demand focuses on other areas, primarily outside of communities, e.g. Yosemite National Park access, Bodie, etc.. Commuting and social service needs would remain fairly constant throughout the year.

**6. Most visitors arrive by car or tour bus.**

Most visitors to Mono County arrive by car or tour bus. Aside from the ski shuttle in Mammoth Lakes, it may be difficult to entice them from their cars. Many people travel to Mono County for the remote experience which a car enables them to enjoy.

## **TRANSIT DEMAND**

Transit demand is often calculated using a demand model which generates demand estimates based on how many trips people make for various purposes (commuting, shopping, etc.). Unfortunately, most demand models are structured for use in urban areas, or non-urban areas with much greater populations than Mono County's. Calculation of transit demand using a demand model for non-urban areas did not generate usable figures because of Mono County's very small population base.

IMDAR ridership data do not provide any useful information concerning potential future demand. IMDAR data do reveal that demand is low for some current routes, since buses on many routes are often far from full. Although the Transit Needs Survey contained questions concerning how often the respondent would use a certain route



(i.e. demand for that route) those data are not specific enough to determine potential future demand.

Overall transit demand in Mono County is not high. Short term planning efforts should focus on assessing and meeting transit needs. Once those needs are met, and once additional data are gathered concerning ridership and demand patterns, and if demand seems to be exceeding the availability of services, potential future demand can be calculated.

## **VI. SERVICE ALTERNATIVES**

### **TYPES OF TRANSIT SERVICE**

This section describes several traditional and non-traditional types of transit service which could be implemented in Mono County.

#### **Fixed Route**

Vehicles operate on a pre-determined route following a set schedule. Fixed route service is convenient for persons without mobility impairments, such as low-income and the general public. A modified type of fixed-route service is currently in use in Mono County in combination with demand responsive service.

Advantages: Relatively low cost per passenger. High schedule reliability. Service does not require advance reservation.

Disadvantages: Waiting for a bus, especially in extreme weather, is not appealing to someone with a car available. In many Mono County communities, it is difficult to walk to a bus stop, either because it is too far, or because there are no safe pedestrian facilities. There are currently no shelters available for passengers waiting for a bus.

#### **Demand Responsive Service**

Demand responsive service, or "dial-a-ride", operates as a door-to-door service, scheduled by a dispatcher. Most convenient for persons who can schedule their rides in advance. Currently in use in Mono County both for local DAR services in several communities and in conjunction with fixed-route schedules between communities.

Advantages: Convenient for mobility impaired riders and senior citizens.

Disadvantages: Relatively high cost per passenger. Less dependable in terms of schedule reliability--inherent difficulties in scheduling trips from a wide range of origins to a wide range of destinations. Low population density and long travel distances result in high costs and long on-board travel times which dissuade all but the most transit dependent from using the service.

#### **Route Deviation**

An alternative type of demand responsive service. Buses follow a specific route but leave the route to serve demand responsive stops.

Advantages: Convenient for most riders.

Disadvantages: Relatively high cost per passenger. Schedule reliability is decreased. On-board travel time is increased.

#### **Checkpoint Service**

An alternative type of demand responsive service. Buses make scheduled stops at "checkpoints" (activity centers, residential complexes) in addition to providing demand responsive service. Drop offs may be at another checkpoint or at a demand responsive stop. Service between checkpoints does not require a reservation.

Advantages: Serves most riders.

Disadvantages: Difficult to dispatch vehicles efficiently. On-board travel time is increased. Fewer demand response requests can be served.

### **User-Side Subsidy**

Utilizes private transportation providers. Eligible persons receive subsidies in the form of vouchers to purchase transportation services at a discount. The sponsoring agency redeems the vouchers at full value. Typically, limited to elderly and disabled. This option would be difficult to implement in Mono County since the availability of transportation providers is limited outside of Mammoth Lakes and the greatest need for elderly and low-income riders is in Antelope Valley and Tri-Valley. User side subsidies generally incur a high cost for long trips. In essence, this is already occurring with the OAA subsidy of IMDAR.

### **Coordination of Ski Area Transit Service**

Mammoth Mountain Ski Area currently provides a winter ski shuttle in Mammoth Lakes, summer shuttle service to Red's Meadow (in conjunction with the Forest Service), and employee vanpools from Bishop. In the past, it has also provided limited summer shuttle service in Mammoth Lakes. The Town of Mammoth Lakes **Transit Design and Development Plan** calls for Mammoth Mountain to operate the future transit system in Mammoth Lakes under a municipal contract from the Town. There is an opportunity to link this plan to future transit development outside of Mammoth Lakes and to expand vanpool services to commuters who are not employees of Mammoth Mountain. In addition, Mammoth Mountain has a large capital investment in vehicles and maintenance facilities, many of which are not in use during the summer. There is potential to contract with Mammoth Mountain to provide additional services throughout the year.

### **Coordination of Public and School District Transportation**

Due to limited public sector resources, there is a trend towards coordination of general public transportation services with the extensive services required and provided by school districts. The school district can purchase fares for students on a public transit system. This is particularly advantageous for transport before and after school activities which would otherwise require a bus trip for only a few students. Parents in Crowley Lake and June Lake have indicated a need for after school transit services for their children. There is an opportunity to develop coordinated student/general public late afternoon transit routes in these areas.

Peak demand times for school transportation often differ from peak public demand. Vehicles and drivers can operate the school service and then general public service. Different vehicle requirements may make this option infeasible. The Sunline Transit Agency in Palm Springs area increased its overall ridership after developing extended service for the school district. The school district purchased bulk tickets which funded the expanded service.

The construction and operation of a joint school district/public system maintenance/operation facility could provide a substantial increase in efficiency by sharing maintenance staff and space between public and school district vehicle fleets. In Mammoth Lakes, the Town Maintenance Facility currently provides services for the Mammoth Unified School District vehicles. Mammoth Mountain also has a large vehicle maintenance facility. There is an opportunity for increased coordination of services between the Town's facility, Mammoth Mountain's facility, the school district, and the public transit system in Mono County.

### **Regional Transit Service**

In the long term, a regional transit service could serve the Eastern Sierra, including Mammoth Lakes. A regional service would provide opportunities for cost-effective administration and operations, as well as greater efficiency in coordinating services. A regional transit service could encompass municipal service in Mammoth Lakes and Bishop and other towns as needed, service between towns in the Eastern Sierra, and connecting service to adjacent areas such as Nevada and Yosemite. It could provide service to a variety of customers--the general public, recreational users, students, and the transit dependent.

### **EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES**

The capital items for public transit service include vehicles, vehicle maintenance facilities, passenger amenities such as shelters and benches, and park-and-ride facilities, and administrative facilities. The necessity for various types of equipment and facilities will be determined by the type of service offered. Equipment and facilities for public transit services must be accessible for the disabled.

#### **Vehicles**

The determination of appropriate vehicles, an acquisition strategy and funding implications depends on the service alternative(s) chosen. Vehicle needs for a fixed route service may differ from those for a demand responsive service intended to serve senior citizens and the disabled. Similarly, vehicle needs for travel between communities may differ from the needs for travel within communities.

Whatever type of buses are determined to be most suitable, there are several ways of acquiring them.

- **Purchase New Vehicles**  
This is the most straightforward and costly option. IMAAA and LTC state procurement procedures may or may not work due to the lack of vehicle purchasing power by IMAAA. The cost of purchasing vehicles could be reduced by several agencies/entities purchasing at one time.
- **Purchase Used Vehicles**  
Used vehicles are available for a small fraction of the cost of new vehicles. It may be financially feasible to purchase a high proportion of backup vehicles.
- **Leasing**  
Leasing provides an opportunity for private sector participation and to spread capital costs over time, but over time the cost may exceed the purchase cost. Short-term leases may be subject to price fluctuations. Without a long-term lease service reliability becomes questionable. Leasing may not be an option in the Eastern Sierra since purveyors are not located in the area.
- **Contract for Service and Vehicles**  
Contracting with an existing transportation provider to provide vehicles and operate the service avoids large capital expenditures but may cost more over time.

#### **Vehicle Maintenance**

The optimum method of providing vehicle maintenance is dependent upon the organizational structure chosen for the transit system. A system that operates its own

service (as opposed to contracting out the operations) may choose to provide maintenance in-house or contract the maintenance to a local garage or maintenance facility. In-house maintenance requires costly facilities and equipment. In most instances, it will be more cost-effective to contract out for maintenance services. If transit services are contracted, maintenance will be the responsibility of the contractor.

Shared maintenance facilities are a cost effective option over building an independent facility. If federal funds are used, they can only be used for the portion of the facility which is dedicated to transit. If a portion of the facility or equipment is shared with other functions, that must be clearly documented. FTA funds can only be used for that portion of the facility which the transit system will use. Several entities in Mono County already have extensive maintenance facilities (i.e. the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area) which could provide opportunities for contracting vehicle maintenance services.

### **Passenger Amenities and Signs**

Passenger amenities such as street furniture (benches and shelters) improve the overall image of a transit system, increase its convenience as a travel mode, and increase ridership. Safe and accessible shelter is vital in harsh weather. To remain accessible in winter, shelters must be consistently maintained (snow removed etc.). Maintenance could be provided on a cooperative basis by the Public Works Departments, Caltrans, and businesses.

Currently, the only transit related amenities in Mono County are bus shelters in Mammoth Lakes. These shelters were not designed for winter use, becoming clogged with snow and inaccessible in the winter. The cost of a modern glass and steel shelter is approximately \$8,000.

The need for passenger amenities depends on the type of service offered. If IMDAR remains primarily a Dial-A-Ride operation, amenities such as shelters may not be necessary. If the service evolves into a fixed-route service or a combination of fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride, shelters may become necessary to enable people to use the system conveniently and safely.

Similarly, signs are not necessary for a Dial-A-Ride operation. If the service evolves into a fixed-route service or a combination of fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride, signs will become necessary to enable people to use the system conveniently.

### **Park-and-Ride Facilities**

Data indicate that it is difficult to pry drivers out of their car once the journey is started, especially in snow country. Park and ride facilities have generally only proven successful when drivers faced a long, congested commute or difficulties with parking at their destination.

Informal park-and-ride lots occur now at the Rovana turnoff on Hwy. 395 in Inyo County, at the junction of Hwys. 203 and 395 outside of Mammoth Lakes, and at the June Lake Junction on Hwy. 395. If a need for commuter services developed, the development of safe and accessible year-round park-and-ride facilities could increase transit ridership on those routes. Initial costs for such facilities would be minor and would include signs and initial site development/grading to provide adequate space for safe parking. Shelters could also be added to provide drop-off facilities. Ongoing costs would include funds for plowing in winter. The best locations for such facilities would be along Hwy. 395 to collect commuters from communities.

If the transit system in Mono County evolves into a fixed route service, park-and-ride facilities may become a necessity since it is difficult in many communities, especially in winter, to walk to a bus stop, either because it is too far, or because there are no safe pedestrian facilities.

### **Administrative Facilities**

IMDAR's current administrative and dispatch facilities are in shared office space with IMAAA in Bishop. This provides a cost-effective solution. Should the organizational structure of the transit system change, administrators should seek shared office space to reduce costs.

## **POTENTIAL ROUTES AND IMPROVEMENTS FOR MONO COUNTY**

*Rural public transit is very generically defined as paratransit services flexibly designed to meet the unique transportation needs of rural communities and citizens.*

*"Paratransit"--UMTA has defined paratransit as transportation services which are tailored to individual needs through flexible scheduling or routing of vehicles including carpooling, vanpooling, dial-a-ride, shared-ride taxi, jitney, airport limousine, and subscription and route-deviated buses.*

*"Flexibly designed"--there is no generally accepted mode of operation such as fixed routes common to urban systems.*

*"Unique transportation needs of rural communities and citizen"s--must identify market segments and design service package to meet the uniquely defined needs.*

(U.S. Department of Transportation. 1989. **Rural and Small Urban Transit Manager's Workshop. Student Workbook. UMTA Technical Assistance Program.** XVII-23.)

Aside from Mammoth Lakes, Mono County is a rural community with unique transit needs. When considering changes or improvements to the Mono County transit system it is important to consider established needs, as well as efficiency and cost effectiveness in fulfilling those needs. The following specific factors should be considered when analyzing potential routes and improvements for the transit system:

1. *What transit dependent populations exist and where do they live?*  
This information is available from the 1990 Census data and the results of the transit surveys. Although it would be ideal to provide service to all communities within Mono County, the lack of need may not justify such a plan.
2. *What current routes are viable and what changes could make marginal routes viable?*  
Ridership rates, farebox ratio data, and survey results provide the initial data for this analysis. To analyze potential changes effectively, additional data on ridership trends are necessary. There is currently no way of knowing whether certain routes are serving five people who ride repeatedly or a larger population which rides sporadically. IMDAR is in the process of improving its ability to analyze ridership and respond with route changes.
3. *Will proposed changes enable the system to fulfill the LTC's goal of providing transit service for transit dependent groups so that they are able to obtain the basic necessities of life primarily within Mono County.*

The need to provide service to transit dependent residents of Mono County will remain. Although most goods and services are available within Mono County, it is actually easier and cheaper for residents of Tri-Valley to go to Bishop and residents of Bridgeport and Antelope Valley to go to Gardnerville and Carson City.

4. *Will proposed changes provide connectivity? At first within the system and later to adjacent transit systems?*

The current system is fragmented and does not allow users to move easily between communities within the County. In addition, it does not allow for connections to adjacent transit systems.

5. *Will the proposed changes increase efficiency and prove cost-effective?*

This is essential for the long-term viability of the system, particularly to develop a public transit system, rather than an expanded social service transit system.

6. *Will the proposed changes implement the goal of the Transit Plan?*

Currently, the goal of transit in Mono County is to provide service for transit dependent populations so they can obtain the necessities of life primarily in Mono County. This goal will remain but in the long-term, the goal of this Transit Plan is to provide service to all residents in the County. This may have several components, each of which may require a different type of service--social service transportation for the elderly and disabled, general public fixed route service, and specialized services.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

### **A. Fixed Route Service along Hwy. 395 from Bishop to Minden--Consolidation of existing routes along Hwy. 395.**

LTC Commissioner Johnston has proposed several options which focus on providing fixed route service along Hwy. 395 from Bishop to Minden. These routes are predicated on a new goal of assuring all residents have access to inter-community service, which is different from the existing goal of filling unmet needs for transit dependent populations.

Option A Two buses would circulate between Minden and Bishop with one bus in reserve (3 buses total).

Option B Two buses circulating between Minden and Bishop with one bus in reserve. One bus circulating within the county from Walker to Tom's Place (4 buses total).

Option C Two buses circulating between Minden and Bishop with one bus in reserve. One bus circulating within the county from Walker to Tom's Place. One bus providing additional afternoon route between Lee Vining and Bishop (5 buses total).

### **Discussion**

This proposal for fixed route service assumes one drop-off point in Minden. Most people who use the current service go to Gardnerville or Carson City for shopping or medical appointments. There is no local bus service in or between Minden,

Gardnerville, and Carson City. After being dropped off in Minden, it would be difficult and costly to get around locally.

This proposal does not discuss service in Tri-Valley. Presumably the Benton to Bishop route would remain since there is a demonstrated need for seniors to go to Bishop for shopping and medical services. Bishop has an established local dial-a-ride service so the bus could drop people off at one point and pick them up later instead of delivering them to each stop. This might be difficult, however, for frail seniors with packages.

This proposal does not discuss the local Dial-A-Ride services in Benton, Bridgeport and Walker. These services fulfill a different need than a fixed-route service would. Presumably, this service would remain, at least in Benton and Walker. Use of DAR service in Bridgeport is very low.

This proposal does expand service and provide increased connectivity for Mono County communities, particularly in the middle and southern portion of the county. The major drawback of all routes, but particularly the Minden to Bishop route, is that the length of the route requires tight scheduling which might be difficult to maintain. One way to alleviate scheduling problems would be to develop park and ride facilities along Hwy. 395 so the bus did not have to spend time going into communities. Park and ride facilities, however, would not provide service to disabled persons, in compliance with ADA requirements. Additional paratransit service for disabled persons might then be required.

A fixed route service of this type would benefit greatly from passenger amenities such as shelters. If park and ride facilities were developed, shelters would be a necessity. Signs would also be a necessity for a fixed route service.

### **Recommendation**

A Bishop to Minden route may be too ambitious at this time. Although it would be ideal to provide fixed route service to all residents, it may be more prudent at this time to ensure that existing needs are met and that service is expanded to unserved or underserved communities. Routes from Bishop to Bridgeport (serving all communities in between), Walker to Gardnerville/Carson City, and Benton to Bishop would serve the needs of all county residents and would expand service to residents of the middle and southern portions of the County.

Antelope Valley residents are geographically removed from the rest of the County. It is easier and more cost effective for them to go to Gardnerville and Carson City for the basic necessities of life. Improvements to that route could increase its efficiency. There is a demonstrated need for this service once a week.

Tri-Valley residents are similarly removed from the rest of the County. It is easier and more cost effective for them to go to Bishop for the basic necessities of life. Improvements to that route could increase its efficiency. There is a demonstrated need for this service once a week.

For Bridgeport residents, it is about equidistant to go to Gardnerville and Carson City or to Bishop for the basic necessities of life. The Bridgeport to Bishop route enables Bridgeport residents to obtain the necessities of life in Bishop and/or Mammoth, and provides service to the bulk of the population in the southern portion of Mono County. It reaches the major activity centers for most of the County's population--Bridgeport, Mammoth Lakes and Bishop.



Replacing the Bridgeport to Carson City route with an additional weekly Bridgeport to Bishop route would provide service to a greater number of county residents. Greater utilization of the Bridgeport to Bishop route would increase utilization of that service, creating a more cost effective service. Rescheduling the existing Bridgeport to Bishop run would also increase the convenience of that route. For example, a voucher system or limited service could be made available in June Lake to increase convenience and utilization of the service. Shoppers in Bishop could utilize the local dial-a-ride service in Bishop, instead of being driven between their destinations in Bishop, enabling the Bridgeport to Bishop bus to maintain a fixed route schedule.

In the future, if demand warrants it, a circular Bridgeport to Bishop route could be established, utilizing two or more buses. One bus could start in Mammoth Lakes or Crowley Lake in the morning on Tuesdays, go to Bridgeport (enabling people to go to the Board of Supervisors meetings), south to Bishop, back to Bridgeport and return to Mammoth or Crowley. Another bus could start in Bridgeport and make a circuit south to Bishop and return to Bridgeport. Consideration should be given to developing park and ride facilities, shelters, and signs for this service.

#### **B. Route Scheduling Based on Established Need**

Maintain the local DAR in Benton and Walker for the coming fiscal year. Collect data on ridership to determine the need for this service.

Maintain the Benton to Bishop and Bridgeport to Carson City routes (once/week).

Continue the Mammoth Lakes to Bishop route (3 times/week).

There is no demonstrated need in June Lake or Mono Basin for fixed route transit service; most people own cars and there are fewer seniors and persons below the poverty line. Community planning groups in those areas did not show any interest in fixed route service, although they did have some interest in specialized services for students and recreational users.

Utilize funding and planning efforts to develop a year round transit service in Mammoth Lakes.

#### **Discussion**

This option fulfills the basic needs of North County residents by taking them to Carson City and Gardnerville, and the needs of Tri-Valley residents by taking them to Bishop. It continues a service in which a number of people have demonstrated an interest (Mammoth Lakes to Bishop route) which enables much of the South County population to fulfill their basic needs in Mammoth Lakes or Bishop.

It maintains local DAR services in Walker and Benton in the short term, at least until more information is available concerning the need for such services. It eliminates Bridgeport DAR services since ridership is very low.

It eliminates the Bridgeport to Bishop route, which actually had the highest rates of ridership and farebox revenues in FY 94/95. Eliminating this route would force people to utilize the Bridgeport to Carson City route which would increase utilization of that service, creating a more cost effective service.

Utilizing funding to develop a year round transit service in Mammoth Lakes would fill a need expressed by many people and would serve a currently underserved population which is a large percentage of the County's population.

**Recommendation**

This option does not meet the goal of expanding service to unserved or underserved communities. It does meet the goal of providing for the basic needs of identified transit dependent populations. It would not further transit development in the County but put it in a holding pattern.

It eliminates one route which would make additional funding available for use elsewhere.

It focuses on developing year round transit in Mammoth Lakes, an identified need which would serve a large percentage of the County's population. Whatever occurs elsewhere in the County, year round transit in Mammoth Lakes should be a priority for transit funding and development.

The need for and use of local DAR services is not clearly defined. Whatever occurs with fixed route schedules, additional information should be gathered concerning DAR use and the service revised, if necessary, to provide a more cost-effective and efficient service.

**C. Specialized Transit**

Outside of providing fixed route and dial-a-ride general public transit services, there are opportunities to develop specialized transit services to serve specific needs. Such services should be developed in cooperation with the appropriate interested entities and run on a trial basis to determine the potential success of the service. As with any new or revised transit service, the proposed service should be widely promoted.

Potential specialized routes include the following:

Summer service from Mammoth Lakes to Lee Vining and Tuolumne Meadows. This service could be provided by a contract with Mammoth Mountain Ski Area which has many idle buses in the summer months. Such a route would provide connectivity with shuttle services in Yosemite National Park and would provide access for local residents and visitors. The results of the Transit Needs Survey showed a strong interest in service to Yosemite for recreational users. This service could be developed in cooperation with YARTS, Yosemite National Park, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, and the Mono County LTC.

Commuter service for Crowley Lake. A route could be developed in conjunction with the school bus service or to replace that service. One morning route, an afterschool route, and an after work route would enable Crowley Lake residents to commute to Mammoth. Survey respondents, as well as the Crowley Lake Planning Group, expressed the need for commuter service to Mammoth.

Winter weekend ski shuttles from Bishop to Mammoth Lakes. This service could be provided by a contract with Mammoth Mountain Ski Area. Interest has been expressed in providing additional weekend ski shuttles. Service from Bishop to Mammoth needs to be coordinated with the shuttle service provided by MMSA

within Mammoth; drop-off points for the Bishop route should provide easy connections to the local Mammoth shuttle.

Additional specialized routes could be developed once these initial routes are established. Survey respondents expressed strong interest in seasonal service to a variety of recreational destinations within the county.

#### **D. Increase Efficiency of All Service**

Existing and proposed routes and service would benefit from increased efficiency. This could be achieved in a number of ways:

Schedule routes to provide greater connectivity. This is discussed in greater detail in Alternative A.

Increase ridership to increase farebox revenues. Full buses are more cost-effective than those with only two or three passengers.

Educate the public about the availability and ease of utilizing public transit.

Develop passenger amenities (shelters, benches, signs) where appropriate to increase the convenience of the service and improve its overall image.

On the Dial-A-Ride services from Walker to Carson City and Benton to Bishop, revise operations to increase efficiency. Instead of trying to accommodate everyone's desires for stops go only to predetermined stops and increase the time spent at each.

Develop more efficient maintenance operations. Explore the possibility of joint maintenance operations with the Town of Mammoth Lakes, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, and the School Districts.

Seek ways to coordinate with other existing transit providers, to contract out services.

#### **OVERALL RECOMMENDATION**

- Implement recommendation in Alternative A to eliminate the Bridgeport to Carson City route and to revise the service from Bridgeport to Bishop to include twice weekly trips from Bridgeport to Bishop.
- Maintain the local DAR service as is in Walker and Benton for FY 96/97. Collect data concerning ridership and use. Revise service if necessary to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Collect data on an on-going basis, analyze annually, and revise service as necessary.
- Maintain the Walker to Gardnerville/Carson City route. Revise operations to increase efficiency--instead of trying to accommodate everyone's desires for stops go only to predetermined stops (e.g. Walmart, Canned Foods, Raleys) and increase time at each.
- Maintain the Benton to Bishop route. Revise operations to increase efficiency--instead of trying to accommodate everyone's desires for stops go only to predetermined stops (e.g. Vons, KMart) and increase time at each.
- Maintain the Mammoth Lakes to Bishop route. Revise service if necessary to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Install signs in Mammoth Lakes and Bishop indicating where the bus stops in each community.

- Develop a year round transit service in Mammoth Lakes.
- Develop specialized transit services and run on a trial basis--summer service from Mammoth Lakes to Lee Vining and Tuolumne Meadows. Winter weekend ski shuttles from Bishop to Mammoth Lakes. A Crowley Lake commuter route. These services should be developed in cooperation with interested entities--e.g. YARTS, Yosemite National Park, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, Mammoth Unified School District. Operations should be contracted out to an appropriate provider (e.g. MMSA).
- Increase the efficiency of all service by implementing recommendations discussed above.

## **VII. ORGANIZATIONAL & OPERATIONAL ALTERNATIVES**

### **CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

#### **Management and Administration**

Mono County's transit system, IMDAR, has a multi-layered organizational structure, as shown in Figure 3. In 1980, Mono County and Inyo County created a joint powers agency, the Inyo Mono Area Agency on Aging (IMAAA), to plan and administer services for persons 60 and over throughout the two counties, including public transportation services. IMAAA contracts out its transit services to the Inyo Mono Department of Community Services, which is managed and operated by the Inyo County Department of Social Services. Various services funded with IMAAA and TDA funds are provided using Inyo County personnel, Inyo County self-insurance, risk management and auditor services. Vehicle, liability and Workman's Compensation insurance are provided through Inyo County self-insurance underwritten by the CSAC Excess Liability Authority at costs approximately 50 percent less than private sector rates. IMAAA, Inyo and Mono Counties need to update new insurance needs.

IMAAA and Mono County signed a contract in 1982 delineating the service agreement and responsibilities for the operation of the transit system. That contract has not been updated. The current administration and operation of the system are substantially different from early contract specifications.

Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride (IMDAR) is the public transportation provider for the region. The system initially provided services only to the elderly; since 1983 the system has also provided public transit services. IMAAA holds title to most of the transit vehicles and makes them available for IMDAR's use. Staff assigned to IMDAR work part-time on IMDAR and part-time on other IMAAA programs. No personnel or entity involved in the administration and operation of IMDAR is devoted fulltime to transit, including the LTC's which oversee the function. This is a result of the historical development of transit services in the Eastern Sierra as one component of a social services program for seniors and disabled persons.

#### **Planning and Policy Direction**

IMAAA serves as a regional transit authority administering funds obtained through funding agreements with both the Mono County and Inyo County Local Transportation Commissions. Policy direction for IMDAR is provided by the Mono County and Inyo County Local Transportation Commissions (LTC's). The LTC's also set the farebox recovery ratio and administer some funding sources for the system.

IMAAA and the LTC have different missions--IMAAA to provide a comprehensive social service program to seniors and disabled persons in Inyo and Mono Counties, and the LTC to provide a comprehensive and efficient transportation system for Mono County. IMAAA's mission does not encompass creating an expanded public transit system in Mono County. The current overlapping organizational structure creates conflicting policies and divided responsibilities. For example, IMAAA has a policy of allowing seniors to "donate" whatever amount they want as their fare. This creates some difficulty in projecting annual farebox revenues, which in turn makes it difficult to determine what the farebox recovery ratio should be, a role left to the LTC. The current

organizational structure was efficient when transit in Mono County was one component of a social service program for the elderly and disabled, but may not be so if the system expands to be a more general public transit system. The LTC needs to determine if IMAAA is to be the operator of public transit services. IMAAA started IMDAR to provide services to seniors and IMDAR has become the de facto public transit provider for Inyo and Mono Counties.

Aside from limited policy direction pertaining to transit in the Regional Transportation Plan, IMDAR has no planning or policy direction. There are no established performance goals or standards for cost containment, other than the farebox recovery requirement. The annual unmet needs hearing serves as an informal means of assessing whether the service is fulfilling its social service goals.

In Mono County overall, there is a replication of transit planning and operations. The Town of Mammoth Lakes has its own transit policy and plan. Mammoth Mountain is providing large scale transit operations in winter, and has a large capital investment in equipment and facilities. The school districts provide transit services to their students. IMDAR provides social services and general public transit. Each entity may have differing needs, but economies of scale could be achieved through consolidation of administration and operations.



**FIGURE 3     IMDAR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

**ORGANIZATIONAL ALTERNATIVES**

Data on transit organizations serving dispersed communities with low population densities indicate that the following criteria should guide the selection of an organizational structure for the system. The organizational structure should be one which can:

- effectively and efficiently plan for needed services and can identify and implement improvements regularly and easily;
- provide services in a manner that meets the needs of riders and is cost-effective;
- meet short and long term needs for transit services;
- ensure the private sector is involved in the funding of and service decisions for the system; and
- justify expenditures in relation to short term and long term needs and goals.

Transit services in rural areas can have a variety of organizational/management structures. Alternatives for Mono County include the following:

1. Restructure the existing joint powers agreement between Inyo County and Mono County which governs IMAAA to more clearly define the transit function and/or adopt a new contract delineating the service agreement and responsibilities for the operation of the transit system
  - +s Provision of transit to greater proportion of community/region.
  - s Would still have multiple layers of authority which were not concerned solely with transit. Doesn't provide coordination with Town of Mammoth Lakes.
2. Form a department of the County.
  - +s Decisions under authority of Board of Supervisors. Administration responsibility of Public Works Director. Broadest tax base--sales, real estate transfer, property.
  - s Funding allocated annually with no extended commitment. Economies of scale more difficult to achieve in purchasing, administration, etc.. Administrative responsibility of Public Works Director could raise conflict of interest issues since approximately 22 % of LTF funds are used for transit and the remainder are used for roads (split between County and Town). More difficult to coordinate with Town of Mammoth Lakes and Inyo County. Increased work load for Public Works Department.
3. Form an intergovernmental agency which includes Mono County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes.
  - +s Proven successful elsewhere (Roaring Fork Transit Agency--Pitkin County and City of Aspen). Firmly defines role of all participants in the provision of transit services. Can easily expand to serve additional areas.
  - s Adds another layer of government but maybe a necessary one since it would clarify the responsibility for transit services. Town or County residents could feel system was not responsive to their needs. Would need to be perceived as an autonomous agency.
4. Form a multi-jurisdictional transit agency with Mono County, Inyo County and the Town of Mammoth Lakes.
  - +s Same as #2, but would serve a greater proportion of the region.
  - s Same as #2.

5. Form a multi-jurisdictional agency (Mono County, Inyo County, Town of Mammoth Lakes, City of Bishop) for the provision of a regional transit authority.
  - + 's Provision of transit to greater proportion of community/region. Would be concerned solely with provision of transit services.
  - 's May be too many competing needs to function efficiently.

For any of these organizational structures, the entity administering the system could operate the system or it could contract the operation to another entity. Due to the low demand for some services and potential seasonal fluctuation in demand for other services, an independent transit service organization would not be cost-effective. The management agency chosen would retain responsibility for funding and system development while the contracting agency or agencies would be responsible for daily operations, including maintenance. In Mono County, IMAAA could continue to provide social service transit, fulfill the paratransit requirement, including in Mammoth Lakes. Mammoth Mountain Ski Area could provide expanded bus service in Mammoth Lakes and elsewhere (Mammoth to Bishop, summer routes from Lee Vining to Yosemite). School district buses could provide additional subscription services for late afternoon runs.

No matter what organizational structure is ultimately chosen, a Transit Coordinating Committee could provide oversight for the transit system to ensure that transit services are as efficient and cost-effective as possible. This committee could include representatives from the Mono and Inyo LTC's, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the City of Bishop, all transit service providers (public and private), and representatives of major employers and/or recreational destinations. The committee could meet several times a year to ensure the effective scheduling of vehicles, the efficient use of available resources, and to ensure services are being provided by the most appropriate agency. The committee could meet to coordinate funding, develop service plans, and monitor the operating and ridership statistics of the transit services. Recommendations of the committee would be sent to the LTC's.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL ALTERNATIVE FOR MONO COUNTY**

Transit services in Mono County, and in the Eastern Sierra as a whole, could be improved by implementation of an organizational structure which focuses solely on transit administration and operation.

In the short-term, it may be most prudent to continue the current administration under IMAAA but to adopt a new contract clearly delineating the roles and responsibilities of all participants. In the long-term, a multi-jurisdictional regional transit agency may be most effective, particularly as continuing economic pressures force public agencies to find methods of economizing and consolidating services and facilities. One agency could deal with the administration, financing, and operation of the system. Economies of scale could be achieved in administrative costs, maintenance costs, etc.. One advantage of the present organizational structure is that cost savings are achieved by using Inyo County personnel and services. Issues concerning the current operational arrangement should be reviewed by Inyo and Mono County officials to assess the fairness of the current system and whether Mono County should contribute more funds to the operation of the system. Future plans should address similar coordination of services between governmental agencies.



## OPERATIONAL ALTERNATIVES

Transit operations include the following components: service monitoring in order to provide the most efficient, comprehensive and cost effective services and marketing research and development to identify and satisfy customer needs and wants.

### Service Monitoring

Service monitoring involves data collection and analysis on an ongoing basis to determine whether the service being offered addresses local needs and whether that service is operating in an efficient manner. Ridership data for IMDAR are sparse, making it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the service in meeting the needs of Mono County residents.

The **Transit Efficiency Study** (1993), conducted by Valley Research and Planning Associates for the Mono County and Inyo County LTC's, recommended several strategies which could be implemented in the short-term to improve service.

- *Enhance annual reporting of ridership data.*

IMDAR has hired a computer programmer to combine reports and provide better analysis of existing operations and expenses. During this process, it is important to determine what information is necessary and in what format to ensure that the data collection and analysis will provide useful results.

- *Review the current rate structure for inconsistencies.*

IMDAR is in the process of doing this.

- *Develop a voucher and token program with local medical providers or merchants.*

This recommendation has not been implemented. The incentive for medical providers or merchants to participate in such a program is low.

- *Computerize revenue and trip accounting to enhance efficiency and accountability.*

IMDAR has hired a computer programmer to combine reports and provide better analysis of existing operations and expenses. Again, it is important to determine what information is needed or wanted to ensure that the accounting system is formatted correctly.

To improve ridership data and trip accounting, the following data should be collected and analyzed on a regular ongoing basis. They will provide vital information regarding how well the current system is functioning and how well it serves the needs of its customers. In addition, the LTC needs to give more direction to IMAAA and IMDAR on transit services to be provided.

- **Passenger Boarding/Alighting**--Comprehensive tallies by the driver, for each route, will provide vital information concerning who rides the bus, when, and where. A separate tally should be completed for each route driven. The tally should address age of the customer (senior/regular/youth), boarding point, and alighting point. This data will enable system administrators and planners to determine weekly, monthly and seasonal ridership trends, as well as trends concerning the age of riders.

- Annual Passenger Survey--Onboard surveys are a vital source of planning information regarding ridership and the purpose of trips. Surveys are the single best way to gain feedback regarding the service. Funding for onboard surveys should be a priority.
- On-Time Performance--Comprehensive records of on-time performance are useful in determining proper scheduling and ensuring quality service. This would be particularly important if the system included more fixed-route services.

### **Marketing Research and Development**

The ultimate measure of success for a rural or specialized transportation service is whether residents are being provided the amount and types of transportation services they desire and need. This can be accomplished through an effective marketing program. Marketing involves research, service development, customer service and promotion. The basic requirement of marketing is to determine what transportation services will meet the needs of existing and potential riders. That service must then be offered at the right price, and adequately promoted or its existence communicated to potential customers.

The service monitoring concepts identified above, along with the annual unmet needs hearing process, will determine the needed service in Mono County. Transit prices in Mono County will be determined largely by available public and private funding sources. What is lacking is a comprehensive marketing program, which identifies various markets (groups of potential customers), identifies strategies for providing transit-related information to those customers, and provides implementation measures for providing that information.

The **Transit Efficiency Study** (1993), conducted by Valley Research and Planning Associates for the Mono County and Inyo County LTC's, identified several marketing strategies which could be implemented in the short-term to increase ridership. Some of these methods were not particularly suited to the audience(s) they needed to reach.

- *Develop short form schedules or flyers to post in public areas, medical waiting rooms, government offices, or motel tourist racks. Flyers should highlight key service areas as well as types of services throughout the entire transit network.*

Flyers have been printed and distributed in public areas. The flyers, however, did not provide comprehensive information about using the bus service and were not user friendly. They were also not distributed widely. Results of the Transit Survey indicate that they were not effective.

Promotional materials should be targeted to specific audiences and distributed in areas which those audiences use. For example, seniors and low income persons in Antelope Valley and Tri-Valley use IMDAR for social service needs (shopping, medical appointments). Materials could be displayed at senior centers and social service offices.

Promotional materials should be well designed, eye-catching, colorful, easy to read, and provide sufficient information to enable a potential user to find out more about the system.

- *Use public service announcements or space in local media to advertise new or revised services and to increase community awareness about services.*

Public service announcements on KMMT and KBIS promote the Mammoth to Bishop route. The ads use kids to promote the service, since ridership on that route includes a lot of kids from Bishop who ride the bus to go skiing in Mammoth. Results of the Transit Survey indicate that kids did respond to the ads. Additional ads targeting different groups might attract additional riders on that route. Ads in Spanish could be particularly effective since the results of the Transit Survey indicated that many hispanic residents in Mammoth Lakes were not aware of IMDAR but were interested in riding it.

- *Participate in community events with a booth and handouts to provide information and to increase community awareness.*

This strategy has not been implemented but might prove effective, especially if information were provided in Spanish in Mammoth Lakes. Many respondents in the Transit Survey indicated that they had learned of the service from friends or through word-of-mouth.

- *Provide a consistent service identity by painting each vehicle with the agency's name and phone number in a prominent format.*

All vehicles in Mono Co have been painted with the same vehicle markings.

To improve marketing, a comprehensive marketing program should be developed, funded in the budget on an ongoing basis, and implemented. Marketing efforts do not need to be elaborate but should be easy to use, professional in appearance, provide comprehensive information, and be readily available. As new transit services are initiated, particularly if the service is intended to tap new passenger markets, marketing efforts should promote the service. Marketing activities must be well coordinated, consistent with overall system objectives, and evaluated on a regular basis with useful results fed back into the planning process.

The initial step in the development of a marketing program is the establishment of program objectives and targets which should be quantifiable and short-term. These objectives will serve as a benchmark to measure progress and to focus on the most desirable projects. Specific marketing ideas are contained in the Issues/Opportunities/Constraints chapter and the Transit Plan chapter.

## VIII. FUNDING ALTERNATIVES

### CURRENT OPERATING COSTS AND FUNDING SOURCES FOR IMDAR

Total expenses for IMDAR's services in Mono County in FY 94/95 were \$ 104,380; total revenues were \$ 103,241, leaving a deficit of \$ 1,139. Operating costs are funded primarily with Transportation Development Act Funds (TDA), State Transit Assistance Funds (STA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 18 Funds, Older Americans Act (OAA) funds, and donations and fares from riders.. Capital acquisitions are funded primarily with FTA Section 16 Funds, FTA Section 26 Funds, and Proposition 116 Bonds.

TDA and STA funds are distributed through the unmet needs hearing process. The LTC holds a public hearing to identify unmet needs, and then determines if identified needs are reasonable to meet. IMDAR prepares a budget to provide existing as well as new services. IMDAR then presents a claim for a portion of the TDA and all of the STA funds available. The remaining TDA funds are split, based on a population formula, between the county and the town to be spent by the road departments. TDA funds are meant to be proactive supportive funding for transit development; the historical dependence on TDA funds for road operations could prove detrimental to transit development.

Operational costs for IMDAR in FY 94/95 are shown in Table 11. It is important to note that on several routes the average fare and the farebox ratio are extremely low. In addition, Table 11 does not include fare support for seniors (OAA monies).

**Table 11 Operational Costs--Mono County Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride  
FY 94/95**

Route	Total Pass.	% Snrs	Average Fare	Total Revenue	Cost/ Route	Cost/ Pass.	Cost/ Mile	Farebo x Ratio
Benton DAR <sup>1</sup>	667	97	\$ 0.25	\$ 165.10	\$ 4,508	\$ 6.76	\$ 6.03	3.7 %
Benton-Bishop	687	92	\$ 2.10	\$1,444.15	\$ 18,564	\$ 27.02	\$ 1.64	7.8 %
Bridgeport DAR <sup>1</sup>	74	65	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 368	\$ 4.97	\$ 2.01	0 %
Bridgeport-Bishop	525	41	\$ 2.73	\$1,435.50	\$ 11,119	\$ 21.18	\$ 1.01	12.9 %
Bridgeport-Carson	727	94	\$ 2.69	\$1,953.00	\$ 18,194	\$ 25.03	\$ 1.36	10.7 %
Mammoth-Bishop	631	5	\$ 2.68	\$1,688.85	\$ 21,435	\$ 33.97	\$ 0.98	7.9 %
Walker DAR <sup>1</sup>	1,436	75	\$ 0.59	\$ 852.60	\$ 17,302	\$ 12.05	\$ 1.50	4.9 %
Walker-Bridgeport	9	93	\$ 0.44	\$ 4.00	\$ 987	NA	\$ 1.80	0.4 %
Walker-Gardnerville	199	82	\$ 1.55	\$ 307.50	\$ 4,510	\$ 22.66	\$ 1.40	6.8 %
Special Rtes.	221	93	\$ 2.65	\$ 585.35	\$ 7,385	\$ 33.42	\$ 0.95	7.9 %
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5,176</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>\$ 1.63</b>	<b>\$8,436.05</b>	<b>\$81,721</b>	<b>\$ 20.16</b>	<b>\$ 1.28</b>	<b>8.1 %</b>

Notes: NA = Data not available. 1. DAR = Dial-A-Ride.  
Table does not include fare support for seniors (OAA monies).

Source: IMAAA.

**Table 12 Budget--Mono County Inyo-Mono Dial-A-Ride, FY 94/95**

<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>	<b>ACTUAL COSTS</b>
<b>Assets</b>	
Tangible Transit Property (Computer and computer equipment)	\$ 1,168
<b>Capital and Liabilities</b>	
Grant from LTF funds	\$ 1,168
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>	<b>ACTUAL COSTS</b>
<b>Revenues</b>	
Passenger fares collected	\$ 8,147
Special transit fares	\$ 485
LTF (TDA funds \$63,339-\$1,168)	\$ 62,171
Local special fare assistance (OAA subsidy of farebox requirement)	\$ 6,498
STA	\$ 10,788
Special demonstration project (25 % of other payments, \$609 CALACT)	\$ 152
FTA Section 18	<u>\$ 15,000</u>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 103,241</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>ACTUAL COSTS</b>
Labor	
Operators salaries and wages (Route wages, training, travel)	\$ 47,315
Other salaries and wages (Program management, dispatchers)	\$ 13,976
Fringe benefits	\$ 5,818
Services (Vehicle costs excluding insurance, tires, fuel and lubricants)	\$ 9,793
<b>Materials and Supplies</b>	
Fuel and lubricants	\$ 8,987
Tires	\$ 1,297
Office supplies	\$ 684
Utilities and Telephone (Inyo pays all utility costs charged to transit except 25% IMAAA office)	\$ 2,574
Vehicle insurance	\$ 5,176
Miscellaneous expense <sup>1</sup>	\$ 7,698
Rentals (25 % of IMAAA office)	<u>\$ 1,062</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 104,380</b>
<b>Net Transit Loss</b>	<b>(\$ 1,139)</b>
Note: Miscellaneous expenses include: Travel and training, workers compensation, physicals, advertising, equipment maintenance, structure maintenance, memberships, petty cash, audits, software, computer training, unemployment insurance, and household supplies.	

Total Local Transportation Fund (LTF) monies for Mono County in 1994/95 were \$334,844, of which approximately 19 percent was used for transit funding. The rest was used by the County and Town Road Departments.

### **FAREBOX RECOVERY REQUIREMENTS**

To be eligible for State Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds, transit services must meet a minimum farebox recovery ratio of 10 percent. Farebox recovery ratio is defined as the percentage of total operating costs that are generated from the farebox intake. The Mono County Local Transportation Commission, which allocates TDA funds in Mono County, has implemented a 17.5 percent farebox ratio standard. Table 13 shows that none of the routes in Mono County achieve the 17.5 percent farebox ratio. In order to meet the farebox recovery requirement for TDA funding eligibility, all routes in Mono County are subsidized by Older American Act funds. This is a problem on routes which do not have substantial senior ridership, i.e. the Mammoth to Bishop route, since OAA funds are to be used specifically for seniors.

Certain costs are exempt from the farebox requirement: capital and insurance costs, and costs for routes meeting certain conditions for two years after the end of the fiscal year in which the extension of service was put in operation. TDA rules and regulations require a triennial performance audit of each operator receiving funds. The audit is based on established goals, objectives and performance standards.

### **FUNDING CRITERIA**

"Provision of a sustainable, permanent funding source has proven to be the single greatest determinant in the success or failure of transit service"  
(Leigh, Scott & Cleary, Inc., p. 94).

Data on small transit systems indicate that the long-term viability of transit service depends on dedicated sources of funding with a mix of revenue sources. Evaluation of potential funding sources for transit services should consider the following:

- Funding must be equitable. The costs of transit service to various segments of the population must correspond with the benefits they accrue.
- Collection of tax funds must be efficient.
- Funding must be sustainable. The ability to forecast future revenues is vital in making correct decisions regarding capital improvements such as vehicles and facilities.
- Funding must be acceptable to the public.

### **POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES**

Funding for transit programs is available from a number of federal and state programs. This section summarizes each of those sources. Detailed information on a number of these programs is available in "Transportation Financing Opportunities: State and Federal Funds Available for Local Agency Capital Outlay Projects" produced by Caltrans' Division of State and Local Project Development.

Generally, the local jurisdiction is responsible for applying for the funding identified below. Cooperative efforts among local agencies, such as the Local Transportation

Commission, the County, the Town, IMAAA and other local entities have been successful in obtaining funding for Mono County transit projects.

### **Federal Sources**

#### **Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP)**

Provides funds for transportation projects on systems funded by federal-aid (functionally classified higher than local road or rural minor collector). Funds are available for transit capital improvements. Administered by Caltrans.

#### **Public Lands Highways Program (PLH)**

Provides funds for highway improvement or construction projects within, adjacent to, or providing access to public lands. May include transportation planning for tourism and recreational travel that benefit recreational development. Proposals are jointly submitted by Caltrans, the local jurisdiction, and the U.S. Forest Service.

#### **Federal Transit Administration "Section 18" Funding**

Provides capital, operating, and administrative assistance for non-urbanized transit operations. The funds are segmented into "apportioned" and "discretionary" programs. The bulk of the funds are apportioned to rural counties based on population levels. The remaining funds are distributed by Caltrans on a discretionary basis and are generally used for capital purposes. Capital projects require a 20 percent local match; operating projects require a 50 percent local match. Projects meeting the mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or the Federal Clean Air Act require a 10 percent local match.

#### **Federal Transit Administration "Section 16" Funding**

Provides capital grants for the purpose of meeting the transportation needs of elderly and disabled persons where public mass transportation services are otherwise unavailable, insufficient or inappropriate. Available to private nonprofit corporations or public agencies approved by the State to coordinate services for the elderly and disabled. Administered by Caltrans. Grant monies awarded on a competitive need basis for accessible vans and buses, communication equipment, vehicle rehabilitation, and computer hardware and software. Requires at least a 20 percent local match; requires a 10 percent local match for projects meeting the mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or the Federal Clean Air Act.

### **State Sources**

#### **Air Quality Management District AB 2766 Funds**

California AB 2766 provides regional air quality management districts with funds to implement transportation control measures in order to reduce air pollutant emissions. This is a relatively new program and the funding potential is unknown. Might be particularly useful in Mammoth Lakes or June Lake.

#### **Flexible Congestion Relief Program (FCR)**

Provides funds for improvements to public mass transit guideways. The improvements must provide congestion relief. Administered by Caltrans.

#### **Transportation Development Act Funding (TDA)**

#### **Local Transportation Fund (LTF)**

#### **State Transit Assistance Funds (STA)**

TDA funds are the largest revenue source for public transit. TDA funds are provided through the Local Transportation Fund (LTF) and State Transit Assistance Funds (STAF). LTF monies are generated by a 1/4 cent statewide sales tax which is returned to the county of origin. Funds must be spent as follows:

- Two percent for the provision of bicycle facilities (barring certain findings)
- The remainder for transit and paratransit purposes, unless the Local Transportation Commission makes a finding that no unmet transit needs exist that can be reasonably met.
- If such a finding is made, the remaining funds can be spent on roadway construction and maintenance purposes.

LTF funds are apportioned to counties on the basis of population. In resort areas, a reasonable argument can be made that funding allocation based solely on permanent population does not sufficiently consider the level of transit need in the areas. Substantial increase on transportation services by part-time residents and visitors is ignored.

Estimated LTF revenues for Mono County through FY 98-99 are \$285,000 per year (Table 47, RTP).

State Transit Assistance Funds (STAF) are generated by a gasoline sales tax. The STAF is allocated to regions based on operator revenues and must be used for transit purposes.

### **Transportation Planning and Development Account (TP & D) Transit Capital Improvement Program (TCI)**

The Transportation Planning and Development Account is funded by the sales tax on the nine cent gas tax and the diesel sales tax. It funds the Transit Capital Improvement Program which provides for transit capital projects. A 50 percent local match is required.

### **Proposition 116, California Clean Air and Transportation Improvement Act**

This legislation provided funds for nonurban counties for rail, transit or bicycle projects.

### **Older Americans Act (OAA)**

Funds available for transit for the elderly but subject to competition from other needs such as legal services, in-home services, and counseling for families with elderly members needing assistance. OAA funds have traditionally been used to subsidize IMDAR by making up the amount of the farebox recovery ratio not collected from fares. Although this has been a reliable source in the past, if the system evolves to provide more service to the general public, and less to seniors, it may no longer be a viable funding source. In addition, OAA funding has been decreasing in recent years.

## **Local Sources**

### **Local Jurisdiction Funding**

The Town or the County can provide funding for transit through their general funds. Additional taxes could be generated through increases in the Transient Occupancy



Tax (TOT), through the imposition of a recreation tax, or through other means. Since such funding is subject to the annual budget process, it is very susceptible to budget reductions which makes it difficult to conduct long term planning for transit improvements and operations.

**Regional Sales Tax to Support Transit Programs**

The County and/or the Town could enact an increase in the sales tax which would be earmarked for transit improvements. Other jurisdictions in California have typically enacted sales tax increases of 0.25 percent to 1 percent for transit purposes. To make such a sales tax increase more palatable, it could be enacted in conjunction with a tax increase to fund roadway improvements and maintenance sources, with a percentage dedicated to transit improvements and operations.

**Tax Increment Financing**

Tax increment financing provides funding through increases in property tax revenues brought about by public improvements. The process requires the establishment of a redevelopment area where public improvements are then financed through the sale of municipal bonds. The bonds are based on the estimated increase in property tax revenues which will occur as a result of the improvements. The increase in property tax is used to pay off the bonds.

**Other Sources****Increased Farebox Revenues**

Raising fares is an equitable method of generating additional funds since the direct beneficiaries of transit service pay. Fares can be flexible to accommodate varying abilities-to-pay. Increasing fares, however, may reduce the attractiveness of using the service and ridership may decline as a result.

**Pre-Development Agreements**

Pre-development agreements and developer incentive packages are similar to transit impact development fees, in that both require the developer to pay for transit improvements. Pre-development agreements allow a developer to play a role in deciding what types of transit improvements will be required. Such agreements can also consider a wide variety of transit specific site design issues.

**Transit Impact Development Fees**

Private funding of transit improvements is commonly generated by fees levied against developers to mitigate the costs of providing additional transit service to the development. These fees commonly take the form of transit capital improvements (such as bus shelters and benches) but can also consist of ongoing transit capital operating assistance as a mitigation of a project's traffic and air quality impacts.

**Excess Rolling Stock Program**

Development fees and sales tax increases may prove unpopular or infeasible in today's economic climate. A cooperative public-private transit service supplementation program would utilize excess shuttle/transit capable vehicles (and/or vehicle time) operated by resorts, motels, hotels, etc.. In return for allowing the use of their vehicles, providers would receive regional recognition and some minor cost mitigation.

**Public/Private Partnerships**

Public/private partnerships to fund transit improvements and operations could be set up with support from commercial areas, homeowners groups, or other private entities who would benefit from increased transit service to their area. A regional service benefiting resort and ski areas could also benefit from financial support from those areas. Contracts with school districts and pre-schools should also be explored. For example, afterschool sports programs could contract with IMDAR or other transit providers to take the kids home after the activity is finished.

## **IX. ISSUES, OPPORTUNITIES, CONSTRAINTS**

### **CURRENT SERVICES**

**ISSUE 1** IMDAR began as a social service transit system and has continued largely in that vein. Administration, management, marketing, routes and type of service are all oriented towards the needs of the elderly and disabled. Such a system is not necessarily conducive to use by other population segments whose needs are for other types of service.

The Transit Needs Assessment in Chapter V analyzes future need for transit. If the need and desire for public transit services increases, particularly from different segments of the population, a different organizational structure may better serve the transit needs of Mono County and the Eastern Sierra (i.e. more fixed route service).

**ISSUE 2** The current route system is fragmented and inefficient. Routes are not scheduled to allow for connections, or for use by commuters. Fixed route schedules are currently only conducive to use by persons with time for a full day trip.

**ISSUE 3** Ridership data for IMDAR are sparse. The system needs to improve its data collection to be able to more accurately determine ridership trends, user characteristics, and future needs. Currently, there is no way of knowing if certain routes are serving the same five people or a greater number. There are no data on how many disabled persons use the service. Collecting thorough and specific data designed to answer pre-determined questions would enable planners to better determine need and how to fulfill that need. The LTC needs to give better direction to IMDAR concerning the transit services to be provided.

**ISSUE 4** Overall ridership on some routes is low--Bridgeport DAR had 74 passengers in FY 94-95, while the Walker-Bridgeport route had 9 passengers that same year.

**ISSUE 5** Although ridership on most IMDAR routes in Mono County is 90 to 100 percent seniors, certain routes have much lower rates of senior ridership. This is significant since IMDAR routes are subsidized by Older American Act funds; the routes must show a benefit to seniors if they are to receive OAA funds.

**ISSUE 6** Most IMDAR routes have a low number of persons per trip. Buses have a capacity of 14-17 persons; buses on most trips are not even half full, leading to higher costs and inefficiency. IMDAR has a policy of not running some routes if a certain number of people do not show up. This could create difficulties for those dependent on the bus service.

**ISSUE 7** IMDAR has a limited marketing program; current marketing efforts are limited. Schedules and flyers are not user friendly, lacking information on how the system operates, where stops are, etc.. Results of the Transit Needs Survey indicate that people want more information about the system. In addition, many hispanic respondents in Mammoth Lakes were not aware of

the system but were interested in using it. There is a need to communicate more effectively with the hispanic community.

**ISSUE 8** The current fare structure contains some inequities. IMAAA's policy of letting seniors pay on a donation basis is not equitable. While 12 percent of all seniors in the county have a household income under the poverty level, there is no way of knowing whether these seniors are using the bus. The senior fare is already discounted. Since seniors comprise a large portion of the ridership, some potential funding may be lost. Having to pay even a small fare, however, could reduce senior ridership, although results from the On-Board Transit Survey indicate that moderate fee increases would not reduce senior ridership.

**ISSUE 9** There are opportunities for coordination between existing public and private transit purveyors which are not being utilized. In the short term, there are opportunities to provide linkages with other local transit systems and with other transportation modes. In the long term, there are opportunities to create a regional transit system integrating all transit needs in the Eastern Sierra.

#### **TRANSIT NEED**

**ISSUE 1** Seniors (aged 60+) are often considered transit dependent. Seniors comprised 14 percent (739 persons) of the total unincorporated area population in 1990. The greatest numbers lived in Bridgeport (24 % of the community population) and Tri-Valley (16 percent of the community population). Ninety seniors had a household income below the poverty line--12 percent of all seniors, 16 percent of all persons below the poverty line. Sixty-three percent of poverty level seniors lived in Antelope Valley; 20 percent lived in Tri-Valley. These areas tend to show high senior ridership levels on Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride, especially on the local DAR services.

**ISSUE 2** Children under 16 who are unable to drive are often considered transit dependent. Children comprised 25 percent (1,274 persons) of the total unincorporated area population in 1990. The greatest numbers lived in Antelope Valley (28 percent of the community population) and Crowley Lake (29 percent of the community population). Children must often travel to school outside of the community where they reside. School bus service is provided but the limited schedule restricts their ability to participate in various activities.

**ISSUE 3** Eleven percent of the total unincorporated area population in 1990 had a household income below the poverty level. Communities with the highest levels of those living below the poverty level included Antelope Valley (21.1 percent of the community population) and Tri-Valley (16.5 percent of the community population). Persons below the poverty level are often considered to be transit dependent. In Mono County, however, only 2.3 percent of all households, including those below the poverty level, did not have a car. Conversations with GAIN and social service employees indicate that individuals without a working car will obtain one as soon as they can.

- ISSUE 4** Only 1.6 percent of the unincorporated area population in 1990 had mobility limitations. This is not a large number but the Americans with Disabilities Act requires transit services to be accessible to disabled persons. Inyo Mono Dial-A-Ride does not have data on how many disabled persons currently use the transit service. Results of the On-Board Transit Survey showed that only 1 rider out of 36 required assistance getting on and off the bus.
- ISSUE 5** Forty-seven households (2.3 percent of all households) in the unincorporated area did not have a car in 1990. There were no households in June Lake or Crowley Lake that did not have a car. Persons without a car are considered to be transit dependent. The census data do not provide further details on households without a car so it is difficult to determine exactly who is included in this group.
- ISSUE 6** Five hundred and seventy-six households (28.3 percent of all households) in the unincorporated area had only one car in 1990. Since it is almost a necessity in Mono County to drive to work, households with only one car but several workers may find it difficult to coordinate transportation, particularly if the workers travel in opposite directions. There may be some demand for commuter transit services for this group.
- ISSUE 7** The average travel time to work in the unincorporated area in 1990 was 20-24 minutes. Only Bridgeport had a shorter average travel time of 5-9 minutes. This is a significant indicator of the fact that most people in the county work outside of the community where they reside.
- There are two principal employment activity centers in the county, Bridgeport and Mammoth Lakes. A significant number of people may also work outside of the county in Bishop. There may be some potential to create commuter services for these routes.
- ISSUE 8** Close to 80 percent of the working population in the unincorporated area drove to work in 1990--63.5 percent alone, 15.3 percent in carpools. Ten percent worked at home and had no commute, 8.4 percent walked, less than one percent biked or took a bus, and 1.6 percent used other means. The overwhelming trend towards driving alone may indicate that it will be difficult to entice people out of their cars.
- ISSUE 9** Mono County's historic development pattern of widely dispersed, small communities will not change. Land use in most communities is not diverse enough to generate a demand for transit within communities. There may be some demand for transit between communities, particularly between primarily residential communities and the county's two main activity centers, Mammoth Lakes and Bridgeport.
- ISSUE 10** The results of the On-Board Transit Survey and the Transit Needs Survey demonstrate that there is an on-going need for transit service for shopping and medical/dental appointments, particularly for the elderly, for residents of Antelope Valley, Bridgeport Valley, and Tri-Valley. There is also potential to expand service from Mammoth Lakes to Bishop, and potentially to increase ridership through improved marketing, particularly to the hispanic community.

- ISSUE 11** The Transit Needs Survey also revealed substantial interest in year-round transit service in the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Although this plan is intended to address transit needs in the unincorporated portion of the county, and not in the Town of Mammoth Lakes, this is a demonstrated need which should be addressed as part of the overall effort to develop transit in the Eastern Sierra.
- ISSUE 12** Overall transit demand (the number of trips people make) in Mono County is not high. Short term planning efforts should focus on assessing and meeting transit needs (identifying those who are transit dependent). Once those needs are met, and once additional data are gathered concerning ridership and demand patterns, and if demand seems to be exceeding the availability of services, potential future demand can be calculated.
- ISSUE 13** Analysis of travel patterns and visitors' travel modes to and within Mono County indicates that the most prudent use of transit resources would be to focus on the needs of local residents and over time develop transit services oriented primarily towards visitors.

#### **SERVICE ALTERNATIVES**

- ISSUE 1** Current transit service in Mono County is fragmented and inefficient. It does not provide a usable service to the main activity centers in the county, Mammoth Lakes and Bridgeport, nor does it provide connections to other services. The current route scheduling makes it difficult to schedule appointments and in many cases does not allow sufficient time for passengers to complete their activities. The current service is not user-friendly for most people but only for those with leisure time to devote the whole day to a trip somewhere.
- ISSUE 2** Route selection and scheduling should provide ease of use, allow for connectivity both within the system and to other systems, provide service to all residents of the county, and enable transit dependent persons to obtain the basic necessities of life primarily within Mono County. It is closer for Tri-Valley residents to go to Bishop for shopping and medical needs. Similarly, it is closer for Bridgeport and Antelope Valley residents to go to Gardnerville or Carson City for shopping and medical needs.
- ISSUE 3** The determination of appropriate vehicles, an acquisition strategy and funding implications depends on the service alternative(s) chosen. Vehicle needs for a fixed route service may differ from those for a demand responsive service intended to serve senior citizens and the disabled. Similarly, vehicle needs for travel between communities may differ from the needs for travel within communities. All vehicles and equipment for public transit service must be accessible for the disabled.
- ISSUE 4** The optimum method of providing vehicle maintenance is dependent upon the organizational structure chosen for the transit system. Joint use of existing maintenance facilities should be explored.
- ISSUE 5** Passenger amenities such as street furniture (benches and shelters) improve the overall image of a transit system, increase its convenience as a travel

mode, and increase ridership. Safe and accessible shelter is vital in harsh weather. Currently, IMDAR has no passenger amenities in Mono County. Depending on the type of service chosen, shelters may or may not be necessary.

- ISSUE 6** Park and ride facilities have generally proven successful only where there is a long commute or limited parking at a destination. Informal park and ride facilities now exist in Mono County and are used primarily by car poolers. If the transit system in Mono County evolves into a fixed route service, park-and-ride facilities may become a necessity since it is difficult in many communities, especially in winter, to walk to a bus stop, either because it is too far, or because there are no safe pedestrian facilities.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL & OPERATIONAL ALTERNATIVES**

- ISSUE 1** IMDAR's current organizational structure is not conducive to the development of a public transit system. There are no clearly delineated responsibilities, no assigned roles. The initial contract between IMAAA and Mono County for the provision of transit services has not been updated since the early 1980's. Current operations differ from the specifications in that contract.

The two entities most involved in the administration of IMDAR, IMAAA and the Mono County LTC, have conflicting missions--IMAAA to provide social services, including transit, to seniors in the County; the LTC to provide a transportation system, including transit, for the county. No one entity involved in IMDAR works solely for the provision of transit services.

- ISSUE 2** IMDAR has no connections to other existing or proposed transit systems in the area, i.e. the Town of Mammoth Lakes proposed transit system. Developing a regional transit system would provide an opportunity to consolidate a variety of administrative and operational functions and to provide a cost effective service to the region.

- ISSUE 3** Operation of part or all of the system, including maintenance, could be contracted out, saving initial capital costs in facilities and equipment.

- ISSUE 4** No matter what organizational structure is chosen, a Transit Coordinating Committee could provide oversight for the transit system to ensure that transit services are as efficient and cost-effective as possible. This committee could include representatives from the Mono and Inyo LTC's, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the City of Bishop, all transit service providers (public and private), and representatives of major employers and/or recreational destinations. The committee could meet several times a year to ensure the effective scheduling of vehicles, the efficient use of available resources, and to ensure services are being provided by the most appropriate agency. The committee could meet to coordinate funding, develop service plans, and monitor the operating and ridership statistics of the transit services. Recommendations of the committee would be sent to the LTC's.

- ISSUE 5** Improvements in service monitoring would improve the efficiency of the system. Complete and consistent ridership data would enable planners and

administrators to determine whether transit needs are being met, and how efficiently the system is operating. Computerized recordkeeping would improve service monitoring but only if the correct data are collected. Ridership data should be collected from driver tallies and from annual or biannual on-board surveys.

**ISSUE 6** Improvements in marketing research, development and implementation would improve the efficiency of the system. A comprehensive marketing program has not been necessary in the past when word-of-mouth was adequate to advertise the social service transit operation. To increase ridership, improve the efficiency of the system, and expand the system to unserved communities in the County it is essential to determine need, provide service to fulfill that need and provide information concerning that service. It is important to target the potential audience and to develop and distribute promotional materials in a manner that will appeal to that audience. The community relations aspect of marketing should also not be overlooked--providing information to community groups and persons to inform them about the service and to help develop connections within the community to promote the service.

#### **FUNDING ALTERNATIVES**

**ISSUE 1** There is a need to increase the efficiency of the current service, reducing operational costs and providing a more cost-effective service. Immediate measures to reduce costs include increasing ridership and increasing the amount of fares collected, particularly from seniors. Long-term measures to reduce costs include consolidating administrative and operational functions with other transit providers in the area to achieve economies of scale.

**ISSUE 2** There are currently no performance goals or standards for cost containment, other than the farebox recovery requirement. To develop a viable public transit service, the system must implement performance standards, review these measures annually, and revise the system as needed to respond.

**ISSUE 3** There is need to increase farebox revenues, both by increasing ridership and by increasing the amount of fares collected from seniors. Increased farebox revenues, both from increased ridership and increased amounts of fares collected, will reduce operational costs.

**ISSUE 4** There is a need to generate additional sources of revenue/funding. The establishment and maintenance of a viable general public transit will require funding sources which are not linked to the elderly. All potential funding sources, including private funding, should be aggressively sought.

**ISSUE 5** The future availability of some funding sources, particularly federal and state sources, may be questionable. There is a need to actively seek that funding while it is available and to develop a broad-based funding program which is not highly dependent on any one source.

**ISSUE 6** LTF funding, which is intended to be used for pro-active development of transit projects, has historically been used in Mono County largely by the County and Town Road Departments. In FY 94/95, approximately 19 percent of the LTF funding available to Mono County was used for transit



projects. There is an opportunity to utilize a larger amount of this funding for transit development; however, it may be politically difficult to do so.

## **X. TRANSIT PLAN**

This Transit Plan contains long-range goals and policies which are intended to address transit-related issues, opportunities and constraints over the next 20 years, and short-term action items which are intended to be implemented during the next 5 years. The short-term action items are follow-up strategies for the development of the transit system outlined in the long-range goals and policies.

The long-range goals and policies address the following:

- Transit operations and service.
- Recommended alternatives for routes and service.
- Performance standards and measures for transit operations and service.
- Transit management strategies (organizational structure).
- Transit service coordination and consolidation strategies.
- Marketing strategies.
- Funding strategies, including a capital improvement program, and an operating and capital budget financing plan.

The short-range action items identify priorities, implementation roles and responsibilities.

In 1993, the Mono County and Inyo County Local Transportation Commissions funded a Transit Efficiency Study to assist in the coordination and automation of transit services in the two counties. The study focused on improving operational and maintenance efficiencies within existing and projected future service needs while maintaining compliance with state and federal regulations. Pertinent recommendations from the study are included in the long-range and short-range plans.

### **LONG RANGE GOALS AND POLICIES**

#### **GOAL**

Provide convenient and efficient public transportation for all Mono County communities and all segments of the population--transit dependent, recreational users, commuters and visitors.

#### **TRANSIT OPERATIONS AND SERVICE**

**POLICY 1** Continue to provide transit services for transit dependent populations.

**POLICY 2** Expand the transit system to provide general public transit service to all communities in Mono County.

**POLICY 3** Provide specialized transit services for recreational users, commuters, and other special groups.

**POLICY 4** Ensure that route selection and scheduling provides connectivity within the system and to adjacent systems.

**POLICY 5** Review the Transit Plan annually and update it as necessary, to ensure that it continues to serve the needs of the public in the Eastern Sierra.

#### **RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVES FOR ROUTES AND SERVICE**

**POLICY 1** Base recommended alternatives for routes and service on the estimated need and demand for service, the provision of connectivity within the system and with adjacent systems, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, and compliance with the goal and policies of the Transit Plan.

#### **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS & MEASURES FOR TRANSIT OPERATIONS AND SERVICE**

**POLICY 1** Develop and implement performance standards to measure the effectiveness of all components of the transit system in meeting stated goals and objectives.

**POLICY 2** Evaluate the system's performance in meeting stated standards on an annual basis. Revise system components and standards as necessary.

#### **TRANSIT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES (ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE)**

**POLICY 1** Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities for all participants in the planning, administration, and operations of transit systems in the Eastern Sierra.

**POLICY 2** Consolidate administration and operation of transit systems in the Eastern Sierra in order to provide a comprehensive, cost effective service and to avoid duplication of administration, planning and operations.

#### **TRANSIT SERVICE COORDINATION AND CONSOLIDATION STRATEGIES**

**POLICY 1** Develop a multi-jurisdictional regional transit agency to provide transit services in the Eastern Sierra.

**POLICY 2** If a multi-jurisdictional regional transit agency is not politically viable, ensure that transit services in the Eastern Sierra are designed to provide coordinated connecting services.

**POLICY 3** Ensure that transit services in the Eastern Sierra provide opportunities for connections with services in adjacent areas.

**POLICY 4** Establish and maintain a Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC) to oversee transit in the Eastern Sierra and ensure that services are as efficient and cost effective as possible.

The Committee should include representatives from the Mono and Inyo LTC's, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the City of Bishop, all transit providers (public and private), and representatives of major employers and/or recreational destinations.

**POLICY 5** Continue to participate actively in Yosemite National Park transit/transportation planning and implementation.

**POLICY 6** Work with transit providers in Inyo County and Douglas County (Nevada) to ensure schedules allow for convenient connections and enable longer trips (e.g. to Reno). There are limited connections in Nevada and currently no public service providers.

### **MARKETING STRATEGIES**

**POLICY 1** Actively promote the transit system on an on-going basis to increase and maintain ridership.

**POLICY 2** Develop and implement a community relations program to ensure that information about the service is readily available and well-known.

**POLICY 3** Provide information and promotional materials in a manner designed to attract specific audiences. Distribute materials where these audiences will see them. Ensure that materials are readily available at all times.

**POLICY 4** Promotional materials should be well designed, eye-catching, colorful, easy to read, readily available and provide sufficient information to enable a potential user to find out more about the system.

**POLICY 5** Ensure that materials are available in Spanish at all times.

**POLICY 6** As new transit services are implemented, design appropriate promotional materials for the service. Distribute those materials where they will be most effective in attracting the desired audience.

**POLICY 7** Seek innovative and low-cost methods of promoting the transit service. Barter services for ads on buses. Promote volunteer services. As services increase which may appeal to vacationers or recreational users, seek tie-ins to marketing efforts for other activities.

### **FUNDING STRATEGIES**

**POLICY 1** Develop sustainable long-term funding for the transit system. It should be broad-based, not dependent on any one source, and not subject to an annual local budget process.

**POLICY 2** Review and revise the Capital Improvement Program in this Plan on a 3-year basis.

**POLICY 3** Review and revise the Transit Operating and Capital Budget Financing Plan on an annual basis.

**POLICY 4** Actively seek to develop and implement new funding sources, including public/private partnerships.

**POLICY 5** Consider contracting with existing transit providers for the operations of the service.

**POLICY 6** Seek ways to reduce administrative, operational and maintenance costs.

**POLICY 7** Increase farebox revenues by increasing ridership and collecting additional fares from seniors.

**POLICY 8** Ensure that funds available for transit development and operations (e.g. LTF) are used to the greatest extent possible for pro-active development of transit projects.

**POLICY 9** Develop a cost sharing arrangement with Inyo County (CA) and Douglas County (NV), i.e. when people are picked up at Mill Creek station the cost should be borne by Inyo County, or when buses operate in Inyo County, Inyo County should pay a proportionate share of the operating expenses.

**SHORT RANGE ACTION ITEMS**

**OBJECTIVE**

Refine the existing transit system to increase efficiency, expand public transit services, stabilize funding, and increase ridership.

**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVES FOR ROUTES AND SERVICE**

**Priority 1: Revise current routes and schedules to increase efficiency and expand service to unserved or underserved communities.**

**Action 1:** Eliminate the Bridgeport to Carson City route, replace it with an additional weekly Bridgeport to Bishop trip and reschedule the existing Bridgeport to Bishop route to increase convenience and utilization. Collect data on an on-going basis, analyze annually, and revise service as necessary.

Responsibility: IMDAR, LTC, Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and ongoing.

**Action 2:** Maintain the local DAR service as is in Walker and Benton for FY 96/97. Collect data concerning ridership and use. Revise service if necessary to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Collect data on an on-going basis, analyze annually, and revise service as necessary.

Responsibility: IMDAR, LTC, Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97.

**Action 3:** Maintain the Walker to Gardnerville/Carson City route. Revise operations to increase efficiency--instead of trying to accommodate everyone's desires for stops go only to predetermined stops (e.g. Walmart, Canned Foods, Raleys) and increase time at each. Revise service if necessary to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Collect data on an on-going basis, analyze annually, and revise service as necessary.

Responsibility: IMDAR, LTC, Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and ongoing.

**Action 4:** Maintain the Benton to Bishop route. Revise operations to increase efficiency--instead of trying to accommodate everyone's desires for stops go only to predetermined stops (e.g. Vons, KMart) and increase time at each. Revise service if necessary to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Collect data on an on-going basis, analyze annually, and revise service as necessary.

Responsibility: IMDAR, LTC, Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and ongoing.

**Action 5:** Maintain the Mammoth Lakes to Bishop route.  
Revise service if necessary to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness.  
Collect data on an on-going basis, analyze annually, and revise service as necessary. Install signs indicating where the bus stops in each community.

Responsibility: IMDAR, LTC, Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and ongoing.

**Priority 2: Develop more efficient maintenance operations.**

**Action 1:** Implement the maintenance efficiency recommendations from the Transit Efficiency Study.

- Develop a comprehensive Warranty Program.
- Hire an Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Working Mechanic Leader.
- Establish Yearly Training Goals for maintenance personnel.
- Require ASE certification for outside vendors servicing agency vehicles.
- Provide for electrical and hydraulic training.
- Update and revise the Preventive Maintenance Check List.
- Contract out extra or complex repairs.
- Increase spare ration.
- Develop an optimum fleet replacement policy.
- Require appropriate training from the manufacturer for new vehicles, particularly regarding lift operation and maintenance.
- Develop and implement a multi-year purchase option agreement.
- Computerize preventive maintenance scheduling to enhance efficiency.

Responsibility: IMDAR with oversight from the Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and ongoing.

**Action 2:** Pursue opportunities to share maintenance facilities, equipment, and staff (e.g. Town of Mammoth Lakes maintenance facility, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area maintenance facilities).

Responsibility: IMDAR with oversight from the Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and ongoing.

**Priority 3: Develop a year round transit service in Mammoth Lakes.**

**Action 1:** Implement the Town of Mammoth Lakes Transit Design and Development Plan. Seek funding to implement the Plan.

Responsibility: Town of Mammoth Lakes, MMSA, LTC, Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: Start in FY 96/97. Implement in stages.

**Priority 4: Develop specialized transit services and run on a trial basis.**

**Action 1:** Develop a summer service from Mammoth Lakes to Lee Vining and Tuolumne Meadows.

Responsibility: LTC and Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC) in coordination with interested entities (Yosemite National Park, MMSA, etc.).

Implementation Date: Start in FY 96/97. Implement in stages. Review service at end of trial and revise if necessary.

**Action 2:** Develop a Crowley Lake commuter service to Mammoth Lakes.

Responsibility: LTC and Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC) in coordination with interested entities (MMSA, Mammoth Unified School District, etc.).

Implementation Date: Start in FY 96/97. Implement in stages. Review service at end of trial and revise if necessary.

**PERFORMANCE STANDARDS & MEASURES FOR TRANSIT OPERATIONS AND SERVICE**

**Priority 1: Develop and implement performance standards to monitor the performance of the transit system.**

**Action 1:** Adopt the following initial performance standards to meet stated goals and objectives:

- Increase ridership on all routes to 80 percent occupancy by end of FY 96/97.
- In FY 96/97, increase farebox revenues by collecting full amount due from each passenger (allowing for discounted rates).
- In FY 96/97, collect comprehensive ridership data on all routes.
- In FY 96/97, be on-time on fixed-routes 90 percent of the time.

Responsibility: Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC), LTC, and IMDAR.

Implementation Date: FY 96/97. On-going review and revision.

**TRANSIT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES (ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE)**

**Priority 1: Continue current administration of IMDAR by IMAAA.**

**Action 1:** Adopt contract delineating roles and responsibilities of all participants in provision of transit services in Mono County.

Review and amend contract on an annual basis at start of fiscal year.

Responsibility: Drafted by Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC). Adopted by IMAAA and Mono County. On-going review by TCC to ensure compliance.

Implementation Date: FY 96/97.



**Priority 2: Develop and implement a plan for consolidation of transit management services in Mono County and potentially the Eastern Sierra.**

**Action 1:** Develop and implement a multi-jurisdictional regional transit agency to address the administration, financing, and operation of the system. Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities of all participants.

Responsibility: Coordinated by Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC). Participation by Mono County, Inyo County, Town of Mammoth Lakes, IMDAR, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area.

Implementation Date: Start in FY 96/97. Implement plan by FY 97/98.

**TRANSIT SERVICE COORDINATION AND CONSOLIDATION STRATEGIES**

**Priority 1: Establish a Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC) to oversee transit development and operations in the Eastern Sierra.**

**Action 1:** Include representatives from the Mono and Inyo LTC's, the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the City of Bishop, all transit service providers (public and private), and representatives of major employers and/or recreational destinations. The committee should meet several times a year to ensure the effective scheduling of vehicles, the efficient use of available resources, and to ensure services are being provided by the most appropriate agency. The committee should coordinate funding, develop service plans, and monitor the operating and ridership statistics of the transit services. Recommendations of the committee should be sent to the LTC's for action.

Responsibility: Mono County LTC.

Implementation Date: FY 96/97.

**FUNDING STRATEGIES**

**Priority 1: Actively pursue and utilize all available funding for transit development and operations.**

**Action 1:** Ensure that the maximum amount of LTF funds are used for pro-active transit development.

Responsibility: Mono County LTC.

Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and on-going.

**Action 2:** Eliminate the donation policy for senior fares. Investigate the need to offer a needs based discount (beyond the senior discount) for truly needy seniors. Actively promote the current pass/punch ticket system which provides a discount over individual trip rates.

Responsibility: Mono County LTC in cooperation with IMAAA, IMDAR.

Implementation Date: FY 96/97.

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**Action 3:** Review the current fare system for inconsistencies, fairness, what the market will bear, and what is justified by operating expenses and the goals of the Transit Plan.

Responsibility: IMDAR, Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97.

**Action 4:** Develop additional sustainable funding sources to eliminate dependency on any one source and to replace OAA funding.

Responsibility: IMDAR, Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and on-going.

**Action 5:** Implement transit-related development impact fees.

Responsibility: Mono County.  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97.

**Action 6:** Solicit private sector funds and/or barter/donation of services (printing, uniforms, design services)--promotion of bus services to increase business, plaque/recognition for design and upkeep etc.

Responsibility: IMDAR, Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and on-going.

### **Priority 2: Review and revise the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).**

**Action 1:** Review and revise the CIP on a 3-year cycle (or as needed).

Responsibility: Mono County LTC, IMDAR, and Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and ongoing.

### **Priority 3: Review and revise the Transit Operating and Capital Budget Financing Plan.**

**Action 1:** Review and revise the Transit Operating and Capital Budget Financing Plan on an annual basis.

Responsibility: Mono County LTC, IMDAR, and Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).  
Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and ongoing.

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES**

### **Priority 1: Improve collection and analysis of ridership data.**

**Action 1:** Implement on-board ridership tallies.

Implement comprehensive tallies by the driver, for each route, to provide vital information concerning who rides the bus, when, and where. A separate tally should be completed for each route driven. The tally should address age of the customer (senior/regular/youth), boarding point, and alighting point. This data will enable system administrators and planners to determine weekly, monthly and seasonal ridership trends, as well as trends concerning the age of riders.

Responsibility: IMDAR with oversight by Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).

Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and on-going review by TCC.

**Action 2:** Implement biannual passenger survey.

Biannual (2x/year) surveys regarding ridership and the purpose of trips. Surveys are the single best way to gain feedback regarding the service.

Responsibility: IMDAR with oversight by Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).

Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and on-going review by TCC.

**Action 3:** Enhance annual reporting of ridership data.

IMDAR is in the process of computerizing their records and accounting. The Transit Coordinating Committee should work with IMDAR to ensure that the report formats provide the most useful analysis of existing operations and expenses. Reports should provide thorough and consistent data from year to year. The Committee and IMDAR should also work to determine what information is necessary and in what format to ensure that the data collection and analysis will provide useful results.

Responsibility: IMDAR with oversight by Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).

Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and on-going review by TCC.

**Action 4:** Computerize revenue and trip accounting.

IMDAR is in the process of computerizing their records and accounting. The Transit Coordinating Committee should work with IMDAR to ensure that the report formats provide the most useful analysis of existing operations and expenses. Reports should provide thorough and consistent data from year to year.

Responsibility: IMDAR with oversight by Transit Coordinating Committee (TCC).

Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and on-going review by TCC.

**Priority 2: Develop a comprehensive marketing program, consistent with the overall system objectives.**

**Action 1:** Develop promotional materials for specific audiences and distribute materials in areas which those audiences use.

For example, seniors and low income persons in Antelope Valley and Tri-Valley use IMDAR for social service needs (shopping, medical appointments). Materials could be displayed at senior centers and social service offices. Materials should be translated into Spanish and available where the hispanic community will see them (social service offices, churches).

Promotional materials should be well designed, eye-catching, colorful, easy to read, readily available and provide sufficient information to enable a potential user to find out more about the system.

Utilize innovative and low-cost methods of developing and producing promotional materials:

A poster design contest for schoolchildren.

Bartering with printing suppliers or other suppliers. Potential for ads on buses.

Public service announcements and newspaper articles.

Volunteered services.

Responsibility: IMDAR with oversight by Transit Coordinating Committee.

Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and on-going.

**Action 2:** Improve the image of IMDAR with a recognizable logo to be used on buses and all transit promotional items.

Responsibility: IMDAR with oversight by Transit Coordinating Committee.

Implementation Date: FY 96/97 and on-going.

**Action 3:** Ensure that phone contacts with IMDAR (requests for information, etc.) are handled in a professional manner that promotes the service.

Continue to provide an 800 number for information and reservations.

Responsibility: IMDAR with oversight by Transit Coordinating Committee.

Implementation Date: On-going.

**Action 4:** Fund marketing in the budget on an on-going basis.

Responsibility: LTC.

Implementation Date: On-going annual basis.

**Action 5:** Review marketing efforts on an biannual basis (2x/year) to ensure that those efforts are providing results.

All callers to IMDAR asking for information should be asked where they heard about the system. The biannual on-board ridership survey should also ask that.

Responsibility: Transit Coordinating Committee.

Implementation Date: On-going.

**Priority 3: Develop and implement a community relations program.**

**Action 1:** Develop a short presentation which makes people aware of the system. Present the program to civic groups (Rotary etc.), Chambers of Commerce, business groups, schools, senior groups, social service providers, church groups. Presentation should be available in Spanish for hispanic community and church groups. Program should outline availability of system, how to use system, connectivity with other systems, benefits of using system, goals for future transit development in the region. The goal is to increase knowledge of and interest in the system.

Responsibility: Transit Coordinating Committee.  
Implementation Date: Fy 96/97.

**Action 2:** Participate in community events with a booth and handouts to provide information and increase community awareness. Material developed for community relations program could also be used here.

Responsibility: Transit Coordinating Committee.  
Implementation Date: Fy 96/97.

**Action 3:** Promote changes in service through the local media. When implementing changes in service, get public service announcements in the newspapers and on the radio. Include information in Spanish. Changes for routes in the northern portion of the county should be placed in media used by north county residents. Changes for routes in the Tri-Valley should be placed in media used by Tri-Valley residents.

Responsibility: Transit Coordinating Committee.  
Implementation Date: On-going.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)**

This section presents a five year capital improvement program for transit services in Mono County. Recommendations for capital needs are based on the service alternatives recommended in the Short Range Action Items. There are minimal capital requirements during the five year planning period (FY 1995/1996 to FY 2000/2001) since the service alternatives recommend continuation of existing services.

**VEHICLE FLEET INVENTORY AND REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE**

IMDAR currently utilizes six vehicles in Mono County. One vehicle is to be replaced during the current year. The remaining vehicles are new and are not due to be replaced until after the five year time frame of this program (based on a recommended 12 year useful life span for vehicles of their size). All vehicles are equipped with lifts which comply with ADA regulations.

The carrying capacity of the existing vehicles should remain adequate for existing and projected passenger loads. No routes operate at capacity; most operate at less than half full. Continuation of existing services is not expected to increase passenger loads beyond the capacity of the existing vehicles during the five year planning period.

**Table 13 Mono County Fleet Replacement Schedule**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Make/Model</b>	<b>Mileage</b>	<b>Replacement Year</b>	<b>Usage</b>
14 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift	1983	Ford/Wayne	200,000+	1996	Ready to Retire
14 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift Rear Storage Unit	1990	Ford/El Dorado	130,000	2002	Bridgeport-Carson City Bridgeport-Bishop
14 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift	1993	Ford/Collins	30,000	2005	Walker DAR Walker-Gardnerville
15 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift	1994	Ford/Supreme	36,000	2006	Benton-Bishop Benton DAR Mammoth-Bishop
17 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift Rear Storage Unit Bike Rack	1995	Chevy/Supreme	On order	2007	Mammoth-Bishop
17 Passenger Bus Wheelchair lift Rear Storage Unit Bike Rack	1995	Chevy/Supreme	On order	2007	Replace Bridgeport Bus

Source: IMAAA.

**FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS**

IMDAR does not have any separate administrative or maintenance facilities. Dispatch and administrative offices are housed in rented space in Bishop which is shared with IMAAA. IMDAR pays a percentage of the rent. No changes are recommended during the five year planning period.

Vehicle maintenance occurs at various vendors in Bishop and Gardnerville (Walker bus only). A Short Range Action Item in this Transit Plan directs the LTC to "Pursue opportunities to share maintenance facilities, equipment, and staff (e.g. Town of Mammoth Lakes maintenance facility, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area maintenance facilities)", beginning in FY 96/97. At this time, no changes are recommended during the five year planning period.

**PASSENGER AMENITIES & SIGNS**

IMDAR offers no passenger amenities (e.g. shelters, benches) other than door-to-door pickups and drop offs. Amenities are not generally needed since much of the current service is demand responsive door-to-door service. Continuation of existing services will not result in any changes in the next five years.

One existing route which would benefit from signs is the Mammoth Lakes to Bishop route. Signs should be installed indicating where the bus stops in each community. Three signs in each community are planned for FY 97/98. Each sign is estimated to cost \$ 250.

**MISCELLANEOUS CAPITAL**

This category includes a small amount to be used annually for miscellaneous office and maintenance capital equipment, such as computer equipment.

**TABLE 14 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) SUMMARY BY YEAR**

CAPITAL PROJECT	FY 96/97	FY 97/98	FY 98/99	FY 99/00	FY 00/01	5 Yr. Total
Vehicle Replacement	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Facilities & Maintenance	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Passenger Amenities	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Signs	\$ 0	\$ 1,500	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,500
Miscellaneous	<u>\$ 2,000</u>	<u>\$ 2,100</u>	<u>\$ 2,205</u>	<u>\$ 2,315</u>	<u>\$ 2,430</u>	<u>\$ 11,050</u>
Annual Total	\$ 2,000	\$3,600	\$2,205	\$2,315	\$ 2,430	\$ 12,550

**TRANSIT OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET FINANCING PLAN**

This section presents five year cost projections for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the operating budget for IMDAR. Funding sources are also identified. Existing and potential funding sources are discussed in detail in Chapter XIII, Funding Alternatives. Cost projections for both the Capital Improvement Program Budget and the Operating Budget are based on the service alternatives recommended in the Short Range Action Items. There are minimal capital requirements during the five year planning period (FY 1995/1996 to FY 2000/2001) since the service alternatives recommend continuation of existing services. Similarly, operating costs are not expected to increase greatly since services will not be expanded.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM BUDGET**

The five year CIP contains only minor capital items. In the past, IMDAR has funded such items with LTF monies. This funding is expected to remain available and is projected to be used to implement the CIP. Major capital items, such as vehicle replacement and facilities & maintenance would require other funding sources, which are discussed in detail in Chapter XIII, Funding Alternatives.

**TABLE 15 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) FUNDING PLAN**

CAPITAL EXPENSE	FY 96/97	FY 97/98	FY 98/99	FY 99/00	FY 00/01	5 Yr. Total
Vehicle Replacement	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Facilities & Maintenance	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Passenger Amenities	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Signs	\$ 0	\$ 1,500	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,500
Miscellaneous	<u>\$ 2,000</u>	<u>\$ 2,100</u>	<u>\$ 2,205</u>	<u>\$ 2,315</u>	<u>\$ 2,430</u>	<u>\$ 11,050</u>
Annual Total	\$ 2,000	\$3,600	\$2,205	\$2,315	\$ 2,430	\$ 12,550
REVENUE SOURCE						
TDA (LTF)	\$ 2,000	\$3,600	\$2,205	\$2,315	\$ 2,430	\$ 12,550



**OPERATING COST PROJECTIONS**

The five year operating cost and revenue projections are based on the recommended service alternatives outlined in the Short Range Action Items. Operating costs are not expected to increase greatly from existing levels since services will not be expanded. The one recommended change in service--elimination of the Bridgeport to Carson City route and initiation of a second weekly Bridgeport to Bishop route--would not significantly change costs. Table 16, Five Year Operating Cost and Revenue Projections, shows a gradual increase over time, due primarily to inflation.

The following assumptions influenced the five year cost and revenue projections:

- **Inflation:** A conservative inflation rate of 5 percent per year is used.
- **Revenue Sources:** Revenue is assumed to be generated from current sources, i.e. FTA Section 18 funds, STA funds, LTF funds, fares, and OAA subsidies.
- **Fares:** Fares are assumed to remain constant through FY 98/99. In FY 99/00, they are assumed to increase 10 percent and then remain constant.
- **Farebox Recovery Ratio:** The farebox recovery ratio is assumed to remain at 17.5 percent.
- **Ridership:** Ridership is assumed to increase 5 percent annually.

Potential additional funding sources for operating costs are discussed in detail in Chapter XIII, Funding Alternatives.

insert table 16, five year operating cost and revenue projections

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **CURRENT INYO MONO DIAL-A-RIDE SCHEDULES**

- A. Benton to Bishop**
- B. Bridgeport to Bishop**
- C. Bridgeport to Carson City**
- D. Mammoth to Bishop**
- E. Walker to Bridgeport**
- F. Walker to Gardnerville**